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CANADA'S HISTORY
THE DIRTY THIRTIES
PLUS

On the cover

This Library and Archives Canada photo shows men with the On to Ottawa Trek boarding boxcars in Kamloops, British Columbia, in 1935.

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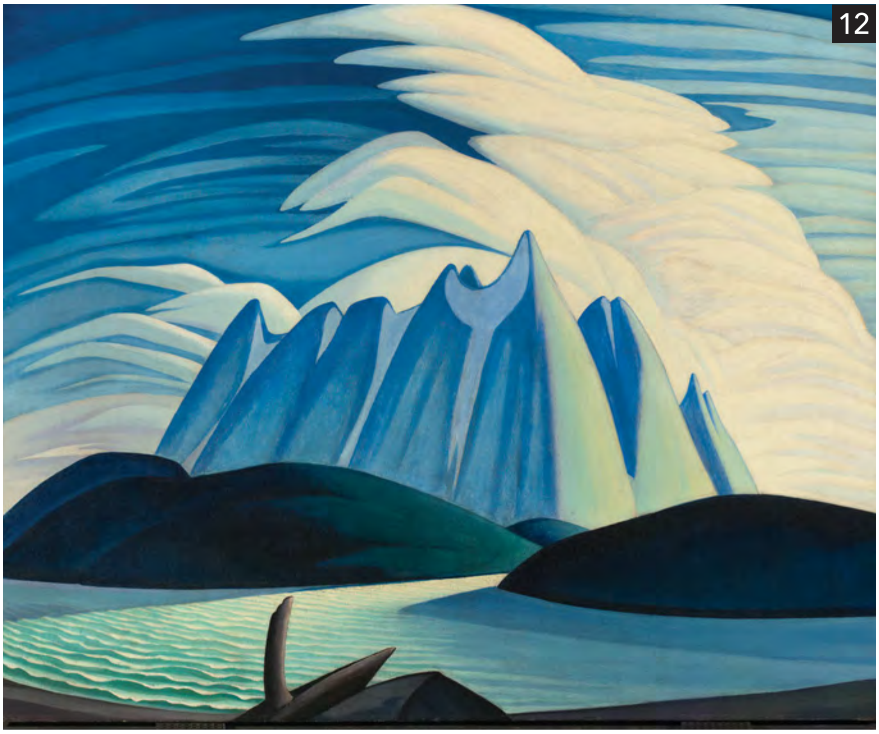
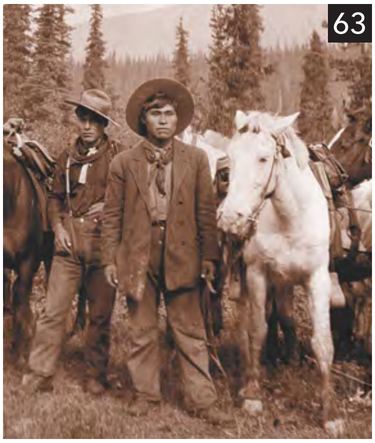


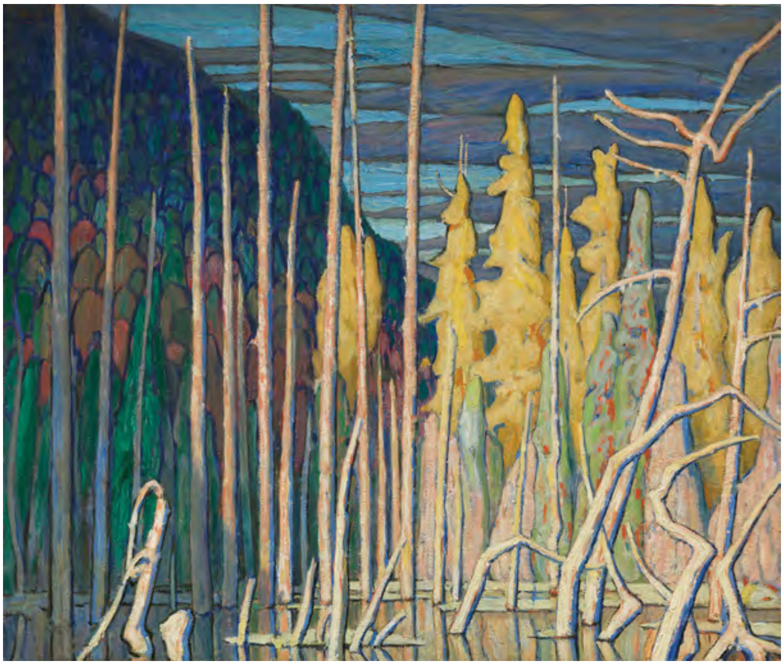


COMING UP IN CANADA'S HISTORY

Laurier's Sunny Ways

Born 175 years ago, former Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier was known for his optimism, his statesmanship, and his oratorical skills. Words he spoke more than a century ago continue to have meaning today.

Plus: The Canadian film unit that scooped the Second World War, the history of bows and arrows, and winter in New France.



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Lawren Stewart Harris, *Tamarack Swamp, Algoma* 1920, oil on canvas, 107.2 x 127.2 cm. Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Gift of Mrs. Margaret H. Knox. Photo: Trevor Mills, Vancouver Art Gallery

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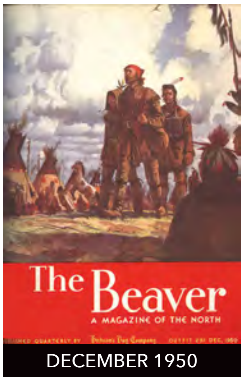
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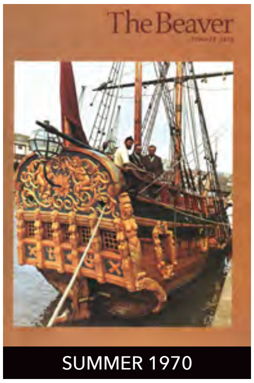

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Hard times

In 2012, the C.D. Howe Institute issued a report on economic downturns in Canada. Titled "Turning Points: Business Cycles in Canada Since 1926," the report rated Canada's recessions much like meteorologists rate hurricanes, on a scale of 1 to 5, with Category 5 being the most severe.

Of the twelve downturns listed, only two rated a catastrophic 5: the periods between April 1929 and February 1933, and between November 1937 and June 1938.

Both periods were part of what we today call the Great Depression.

The Depression began in October 1929, when two years of soaring stock markets came to an abrupt crash. The C.D. Howe Institute tells us that the collapse in Canada was much more severe than it was in the United States.

The economic crisis was compounded by a prolonged drought that turned swaths of the Prairie provinces into a dust bowl.

In his book *The Great Depression: 1929–1939*, Pierre Berton described in vivid detail the widespread suffering as more than 1.5 million people went on the dole and as many as "70,000 young men travelled like hoboes."

In this issue, historian Bill Waiser writes of a moment when those so-called hoboes fought back against a federal-provincial relief program that forced them to labour in remote camps for twenty cents per day.

"Hold the Fort" tells of an attempt in 1935 by jobless men to illegally ride by train to the nation's capital to demand better wages and living conditions.

The protest was peaceful, but the official response was not; the trek would come to a jarring, violent end in Regina.

Today, the pain of the Great Depression is a fading memory. We hear the word "hobo" and think of Charlie Chaplin, and not of the tens of thousands of Canadians who suffered from deprivation and want.

The C.D. Howe report tells us that the recession of 2008–09 was a Category 4 event. Jobs were lost, investment values plummetted, but Canada actually fared better than many other nations.

The Depression generation wasn't so fortunate. Their crisis ended in 1939 because of the outbreak of the Second World War. As Berton reminds us, "war, which would bring mutilation and death, would also bring jobs... [and] that is the bitterest irony of all."

Elsewhere in this issue, we bring you a story about civilian women who survived a Japanese prison camp in the Second World War; an investigation into the mysterious parentage of Samuel de Champlain; a look back at 1816, the "Year Without a Summer"; and a profile of a former Governor General of Canada whose pulpy potboiler helped to propel the spy novel to new heights.

Mark Reid

CONTRIBUTORS

Bill Waiser wrote about the On to Ottawa Trek. He is a distinguished professor emeritus at the University of Saskatchewan and the author of more than a dozen books, including *All Hell Can't Stop Us: The On-to-Ottawa Trek and Regina Riot*.

Q&A: What project are you working on now?

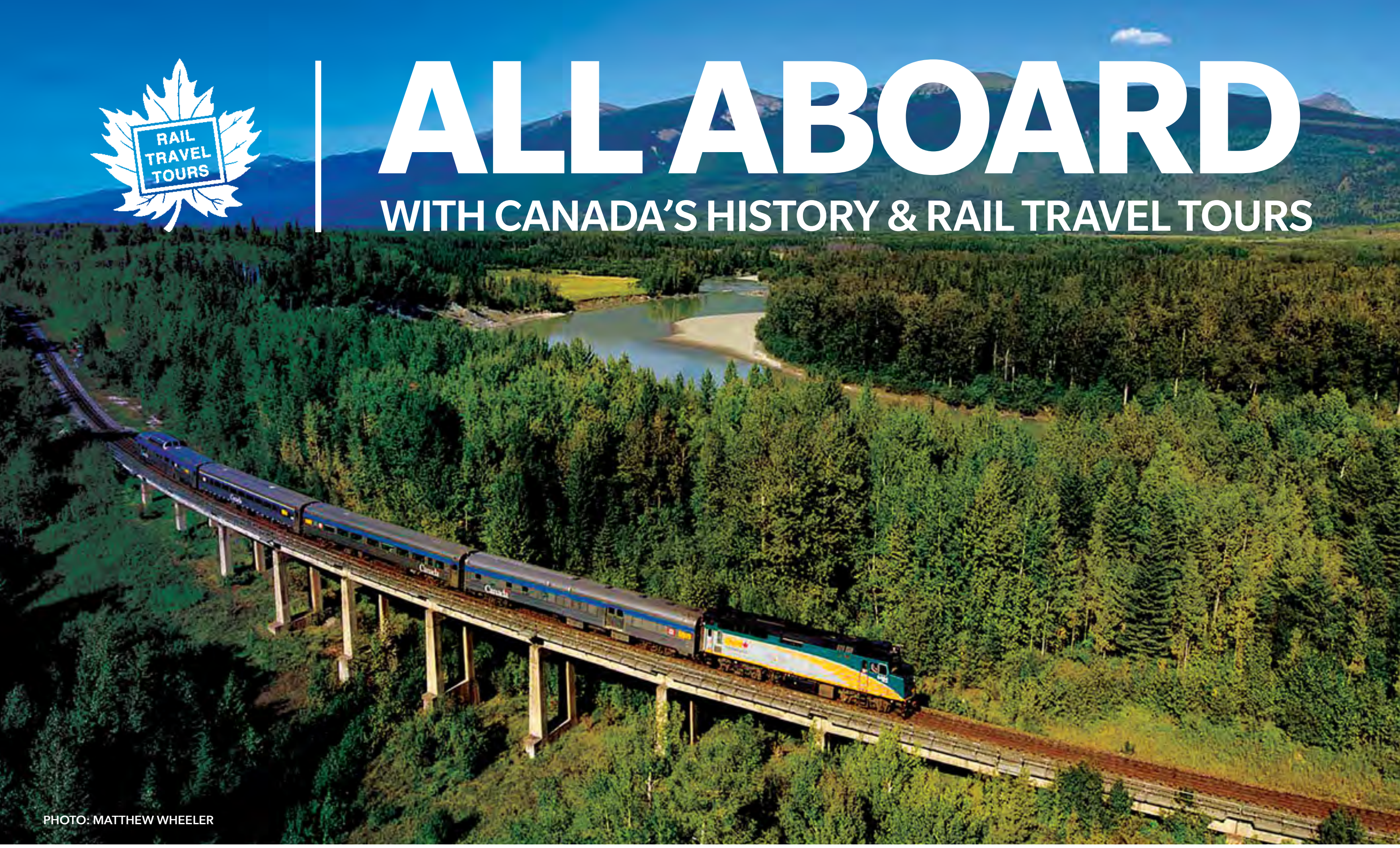
The story of Almighty Voice, the Willow Cree man who was the most wanted fugitive in Canada in the mid-1890s. I plan to examine what actually happened and how the story has been interpreted.

Alan MacEachern wrote about the wide-ranging climatic impact of a massive volcano that erupted in 1815. MacEachern teaches history at the University of Western Ontario. He publishes widely on nature and the Canadian past, and was the founding director of NiCHE: Network in Canadian History & Environment (niche-canada.org). He is currently completing a history of the 1825 Miramichi fire.

Kate Jaimet is the author of a story about John Buchan's dual career as Canadian Governor General and spy novelist. Jaimet is an Ottawa-based freelance journalist with nearly two decades of experience in daily newspaper and magazine writing. Her work has been published in *National Geographic Kids*, *Ottawa Magazine*, the *Ottawa Citizen*, and the *Globe and Mail*.

Lorraine Mallinder wrote about a Canadian woman's Second World War experience in Japanese captivity in Singapore. She is a freelance journalist who has written for the BBC, *The Irish Times*, *Global Post*, *Montreal Gazette*, and many other publications.

PHOTO TOP LEFT: ANDREW WORKMAN PHOTO OF BILL WAISER: SASKATOON STAR PHOENIX



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CANADA'S HISTORY

Missing people

I enjoyed Roy MacGregor's sweeping review of our search as Canadians for our national identity ["An Unknown Country," June-July 2016]. He referenced George Grant's journal of the Sandford Fleming expedition. This 1872 record is really a bookend to another significant traversing of our country: *Paul Kane's Wanderings of an Artist* and his two distinct journeys of 1845 and 1846–48.

What strikes one in reading the two journals back-to-back is how markedly different was the land they were traversing in this twenty-four-year period. Kane journeyed across a continent that was inhabited and governed by indigenous people. The Fleming-Grant expedition found a land largely depopulated of its Aboriginal inhabitants.

One might surmise that, to the journeying Europeans of the Victorian age, their encounters with the now-depleted indigenous cultures and peoples confirmed that it was indeed an unknown and largely unoccupied land — an idea that subsequent settlers hold to this day.

Michael Clague
Vancouver

MCCORD

Missed the train

In reading the article by Roy MacGregor ["An Unknown Country," June-July 2016], I note his statement, "I have travelled millions of kilometres by jet plane, helicopter, bush plane, military transport, rental car, bus, ferry, bicycle, motorboat, canoe, kayak, foot, and thumb…." He says nothing about rail or train. Is this an innocent omission?

Doug Belcher
Winnipeg

Pals in print

I read the June-July issue of *Canada's History* with such delight. I found an article about my old friend Charley Fairbank, an article by a more recent trusted friend, Roy MacGregor, wonderful pictures by Charles Pachter, and another instructive genealogical article by "you are a god" Paul Jones. The magazine just gets better and better.

Gail Benjafield
St. Catharines, Ontario

A familiar face

How nice to see Peter Crerar, of Metcalfe, Ontario, in the photo of him and friends heading off to join the militia during the Fenian Raids. ["Green Terror," June-July 2016]. He is my great-grandfather!

Duff Crerar
Grande Prairie, Albert

Provincial police overlooked

It was with keen interest that I began reading the ten-page spread on Canadian criminals and law enforcement in the April-May 2016 issue. After reading the spread, my feeling was disappointment.

Once again, the historical reputation of the RCMP is being enhanced at the expense of the brave sacrifices of the former provincial police forces of Alberta (1917–32), British Columbia (1858–1950), and Manitoba (1870–1932).

None of these historic forces were named. It is little wonder that their impressive law enforcement contributions are quickly disappearing from the record.

Andrew F. Maksymchuk
Vernon, British Columbia

Remembering Lorene

The article about Lorene Squire ["Picture Perfect," April-May 2016] sure brought back memories. Lorene stayed with our family many times while in the North Battleford, Saskatchewan, area in the 1930s. The conversations over dinner were very entertaining, with Lorene telling her stories about her day of taking photographs. When Mom and Dad were notified that Lorene was killed in a car accident, that was a sad day for us.

Lloyd How and Olive Hayes
North Battleford, Saskatchewan

Made in the U.S.A.

Counting the criminals in Brian Brennan's intriguing article "Outlaws" [April-May 2016] reveals that eight of the twelve he discusses came from the U.S. It seems Canada's West was so tame it had to import its outlaws.

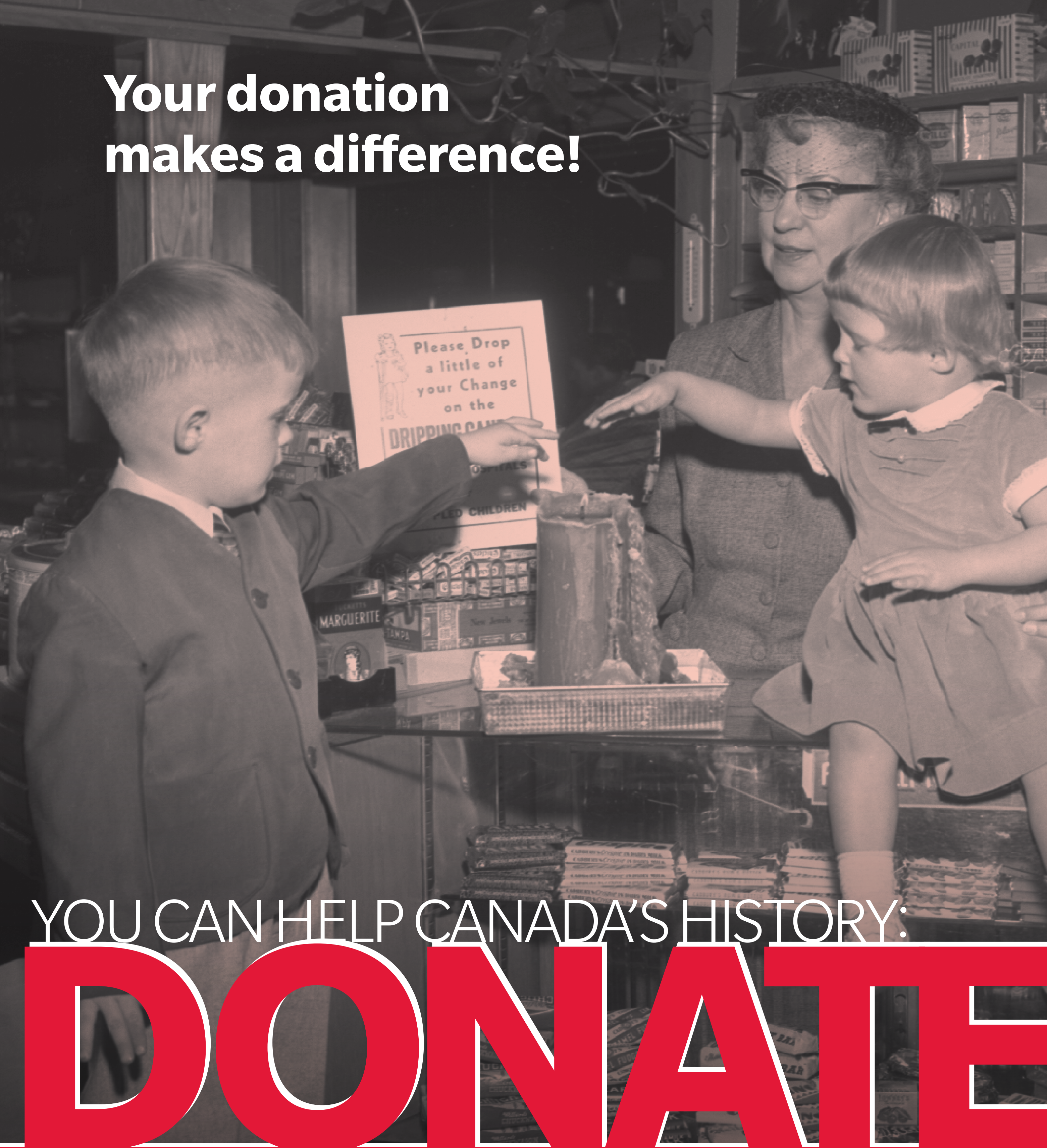
Bill Longstaff
Calgary

Errata

In the June-July issue, a caption in "An Unknown Country" referred to Tom Thomson as a Group of Seven artist. He inspired members of the group but died two years before it was formed. In "Green Terror," an editing change wrongly referred to U.S. President Andrew Jackson. Andrew Johnson was president in 1866. *A caption in the same article reversed the name of Owen Staples. An editing error in "Battle Scars" gave the wrong date for the sinking of the* Titanic *— April 15, 1912, is the correct date. And the Editor's Note reference to Canada's 150th birthday should have read 2017, not 1917.*

In the April-May issue's "Mild West," Commissioner George French led the NWMP's 1874 trek west. And the Brush Strokes item in that issue was written by Darlene Wight.

During the fur trade era, outposts regularly received "packets" of correspondence. Email your comments to editors@CanadasHistory.ca or write to Canada's History, Bryce Hall Main Floor, 515 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R3B 2E9 Canada.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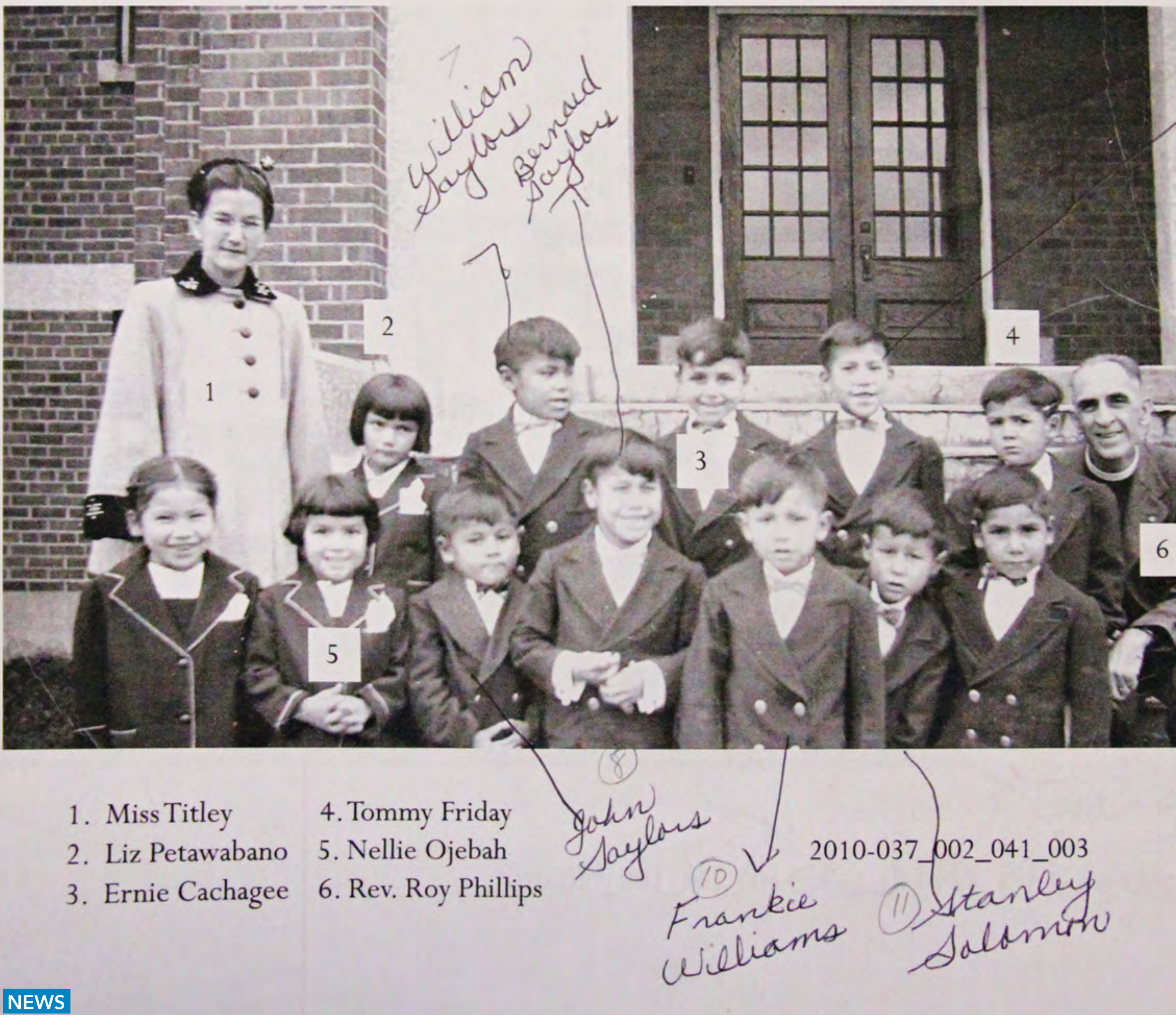

1. Miss Titley
2. Liz Petawabano
3. Ernie Cachagee
4. Tommy Friday
5. Nellie Ojebah
6. Rev. Roy Phillips

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NEWS

Facing the past

Residential schools naming project seeks to identify former students depicted in photographs.

For too long, they were faces without names, frozen in black and white — hundreds of photos of boys and girls sent to residential schools to be stripped of their culture, language, and identities.

Photographs at residential schools were taken by staff, church organizations, or government officials, and these images rarely ended up in the hands of the students. The photographs ended up in private, church, or government archives, often without context and with very few students identified in the photos.

Now, thanks to a partnership between an Ontario residential school archive and First Nations across Canada, many of those students have been identified and the photos returned to their rightful owners.

Starting in 2005, the Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre (SRSC) began the Remember the Children: Photograph Identification Project. This project has involved work to identify people in residential school photographs and to put the images back into the hands of the indigenous communities represented in the pictures.

The pilot project for Remember the Children focused on the thousands of images held by the Shingwauk archive re-

7
Billy Pine

Clockwise from left: A photo of staff and students at Shingwauk Indian Residential School, circa 1940, shows names of previously unidentified students pencilled in. A sewing class graduation at Shingwauk, 1939. Shingwauk Gathering and Conference participants look through albums of residential school photographs.

BERNICE LOGAN FONDS/RUTH A. COX-INGLE FONDS, SHINGWAUK RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS CENTRE; MELISSA CONNOR.

lating to the residential schools that were located in Spanish, Ontario. SRSC staff digitized the photographs and created thematically organized reproduction photo albums, and these albums were then taken into First Nation communities in the Algoma-Manitoulin region.

A handful of survivors acted as volunteer liaisons for this project, introducing the photo albums to communities and starting conversations about the photographs.

At the conclusion of the pilot project, over forty per cent of the individuals pictured in the albums had been identified. But perhaps more meaningfully, updated copies of the albums were left in the communities, and anyone who recognized themselves or a family member in a photograph was provided with a free copy of the image.

Since this pilot project, Remember the Children has expanded. The project now includes photo albums for every residential school in Ontario as well as select schools in Western Canada and northern Quebec.

These photographs have been brought to homes, community centres, and local events across Canada.

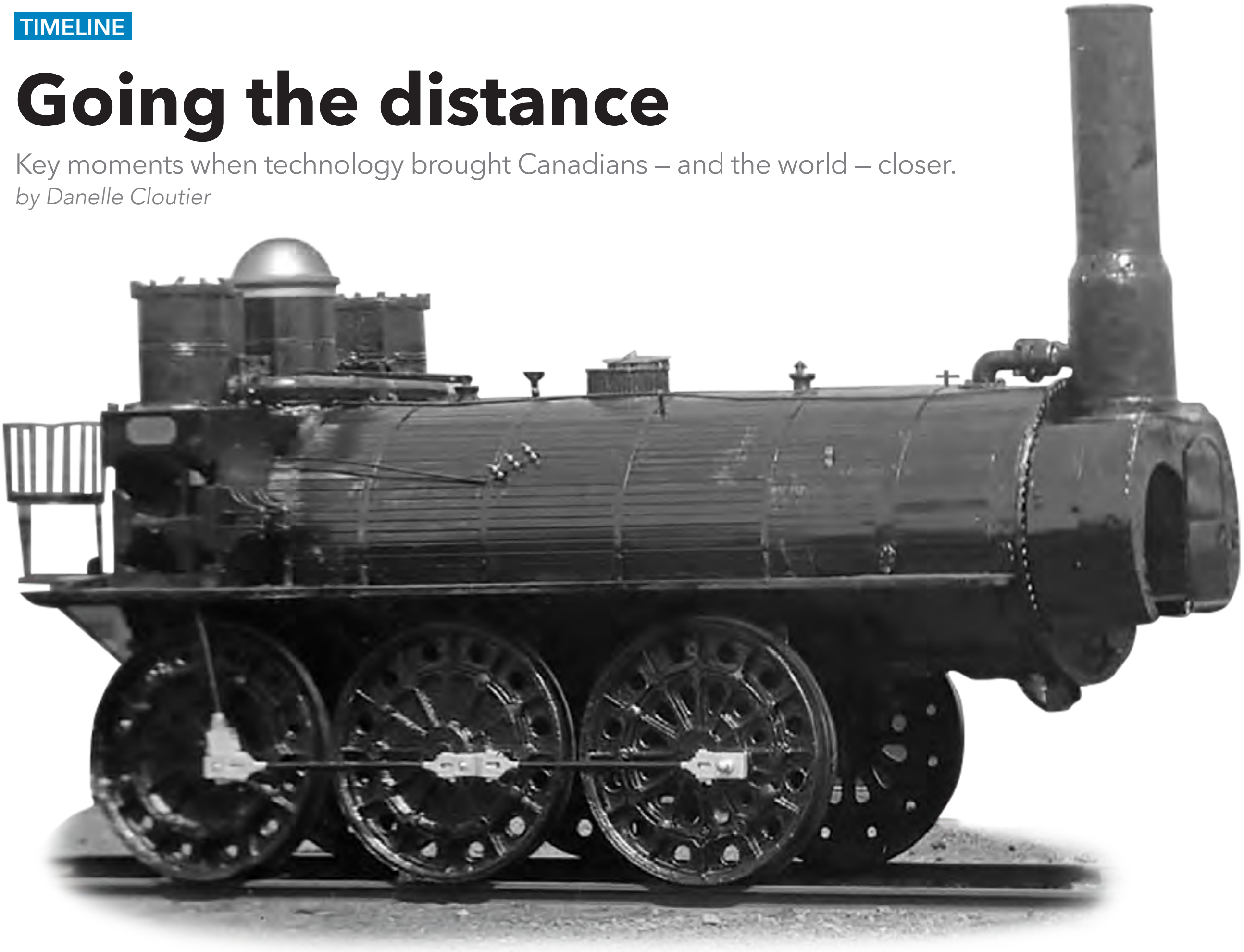
— Krista McCracken

TIMELINE

Going the distance

Key moments when technology brought Canadians – and the world – closer.

by Danelle Cloutier



JULY 21, 1836

Canada's first public railroad opens in Lower Canada (now Quebec). The Champlain and St. Lawrence Railroad connected La Prairie on the St. Lawrence River and Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu. The first train to travel the line was the *Dorchester*, shown above, which burned wood for fuel and had a top speed of forty-eight kilometres per hour.

AUGUST 10, 1876

Alexander Graham Bell, above, receives the world's first long-distance call. Bell received the call from Brantford, Ontario, while using a telephone at a telegraph office in Robert White's Boot and Shoe Store in Paris, Ontario. The distance between the two callers was approximately thirteen kilometres.

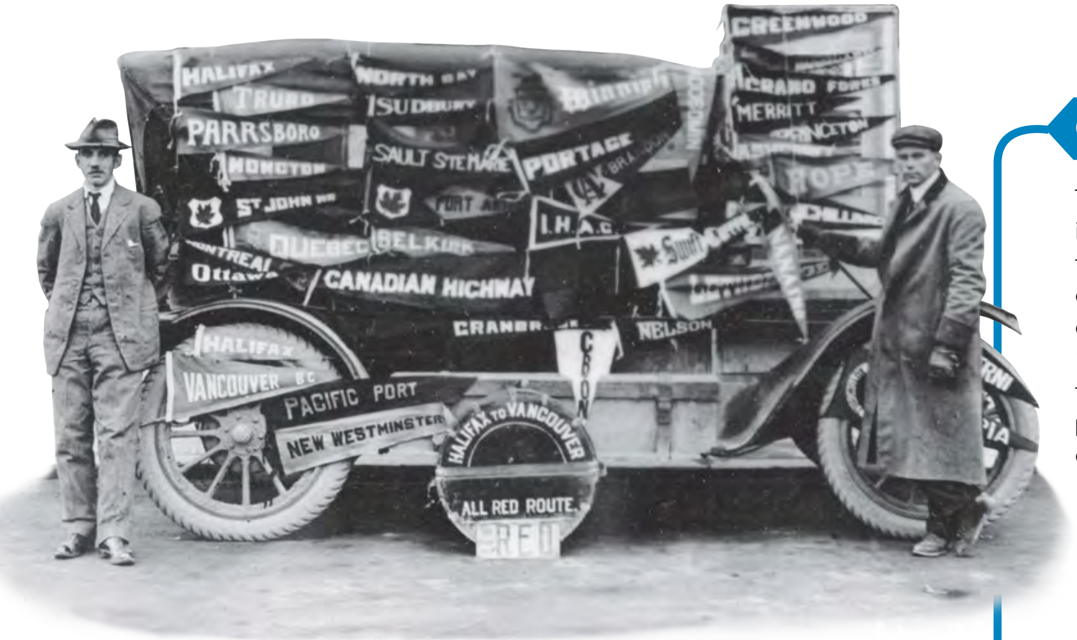
NOVEMBER 7, 1885

Donald A. Smith, president of the Canadian Pacific Railway, drives the last spike in Canada's first transcontinental railway. However, due to the need to continue working on sections of the line, it would take six more months before the first cross-Canada train voyage could be completed. That occurred on July 4, 1886, when a Canadian Pacific Railway passenger train arrived at Port Moody, British Columbia, nearly six days after it had departed from Montreal.

TOP LEFT: LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA. FAR LEFT: ALAMY. NEAR LEFT: CANADA SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY MUSEUM.
TOP RIGHT AND CENTRE RIGHT: LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA. BOTTOM RIGHT: NASA.

FEBRUARY 23, 1909

Five years after a pair of American brothers achieve the world's first powered flight, a small group gathers at Baddeck, in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, to make Canadian history. Led by inventor Alexander Graham Bell, the team watches pilot J.A.D. McCurdy fly the *Silver Dart* a distance of around eight hundred metres, completing the first powered flight in Canada.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HALIFAX TO VANCOUVER
ALL RED ROUTE
REO

OCTOBER 14, 1912

Thomas Wilby and Jack Haney roll into Vancouver after a journey of forty-nine days, completing the first cross-Canada automobile trip. The duo had departed from Halifax in a 1912 REO, bearing a bottle of water from the Atlantic Ocean that was poured into the Pacific as a symbolic ending to their historic road trip.

OCTOBER 5, 1984

Marc Garneau takes a trip that's literally out of this world, becoming the first Canadian to reach outer space. Garneau serves as a payload specialist aboard the space shuttle *Challenger*. During his career as an astronaut, Garneau logged a total of 677 hours in space over three shuttle missions.

USA
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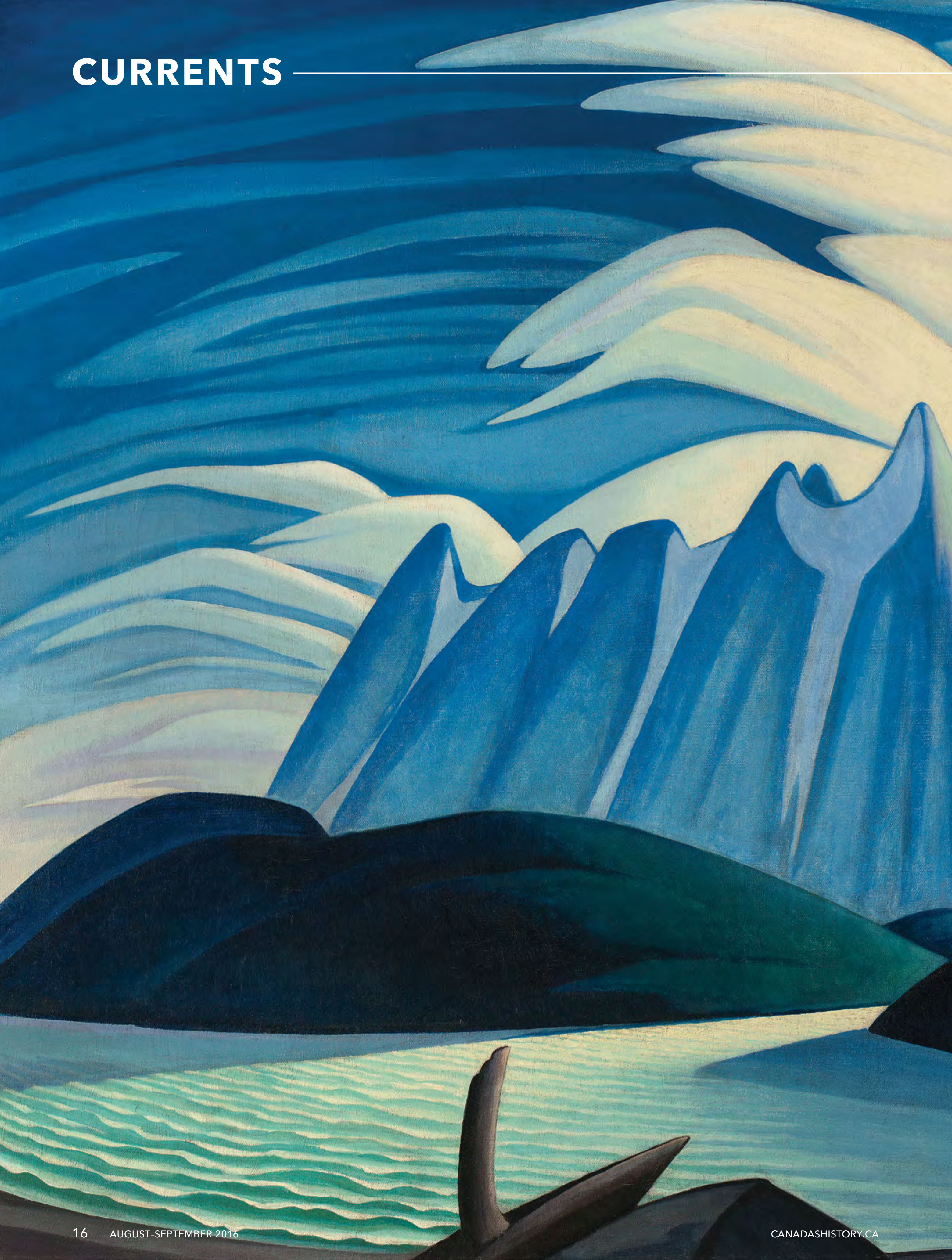

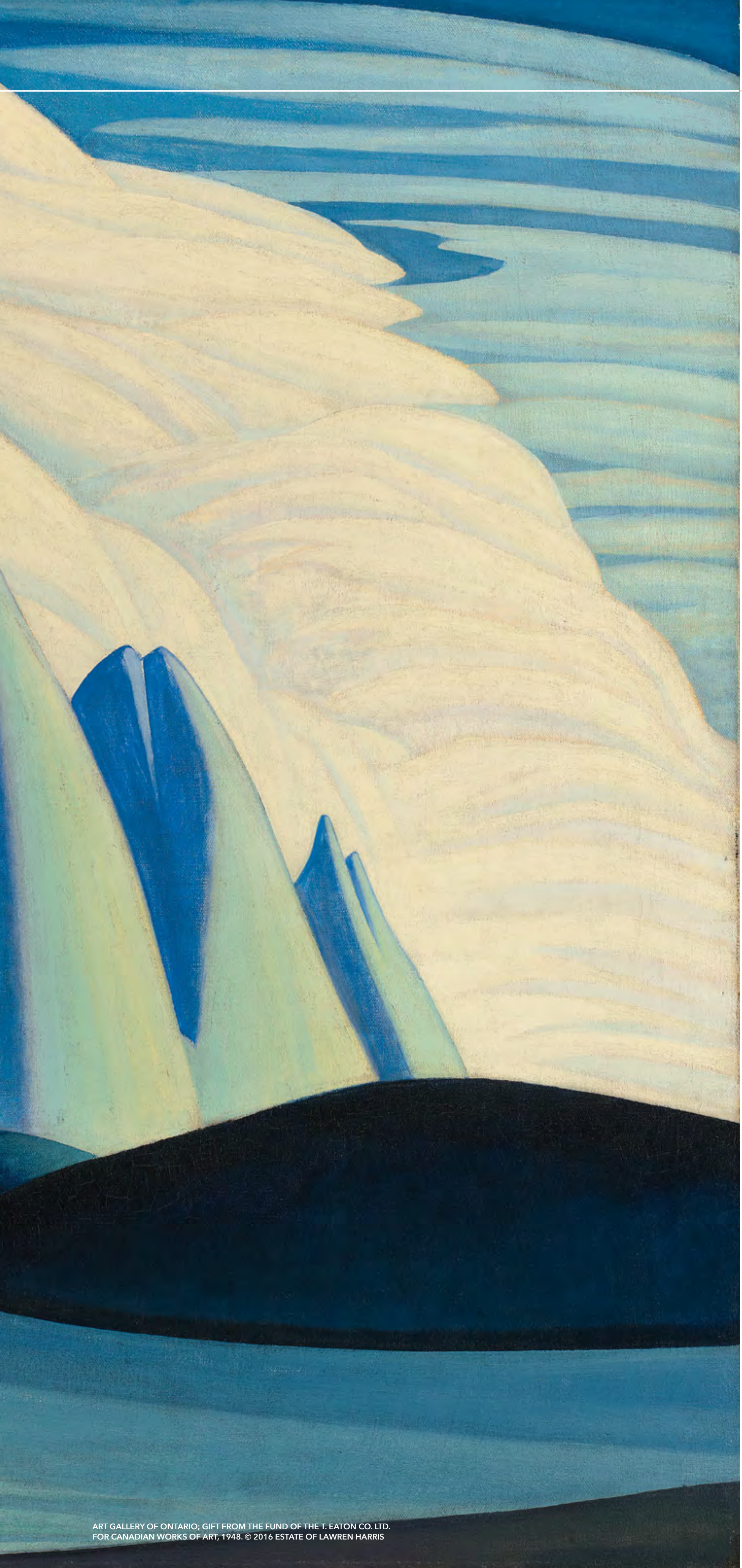

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BRUSH STROKES

Lake and Mountains

by Lawren Harris, 1928, oil on canvas, 130.8 cm x 160.7 cm

One of Canada's most beloved painters is the subject of a major solo exhibition that debuted last year in Los Angeles and concludes this summer in Toronto. Works in The Idea of North: The Paintings of Lawren Harris were selected by arts aficionado and well-known comedian Steve Martin, who wanted to introduce Harris to U.S. audiences.

Born in 1885 to a wealthy Brantford, Ontario, family, Harris studied art abroad before returning to Toronto in 1908. He soon befriended artists such as Tom Thomson and J.E.H. MacDonald, and in 1920 he co-founded the Group of Seven painters with the aim of developing a uniquely Canadian artistic style.

Harris supported the work of fellow artists, including by arranging trips to paint in remote settings. Meanwhile, his own art evolved from earlier city scenes to landscapes inspired by Ontario's North, the Rockies, and eventually the Arctic. *Lake and Mountains*, shown here, was painted after several summer trips to sketch in Canada's Rocky Mountains. At once stark and dramatic, the work embodies a feeling for the power and beauty of the land as well as a sense for the impact of a clean, almost unearthly design.

Martin notes that as Harris's iconic landscapes developed towards the pure abstraction of his later works, "The absence of organic things in the mountains, lakes, and icebergs he now painted created a paradoxical effect: the pictures came to life."

The Idea of North shows at the Art Gallery of Ontario until September 18.
— *Phil Koch*

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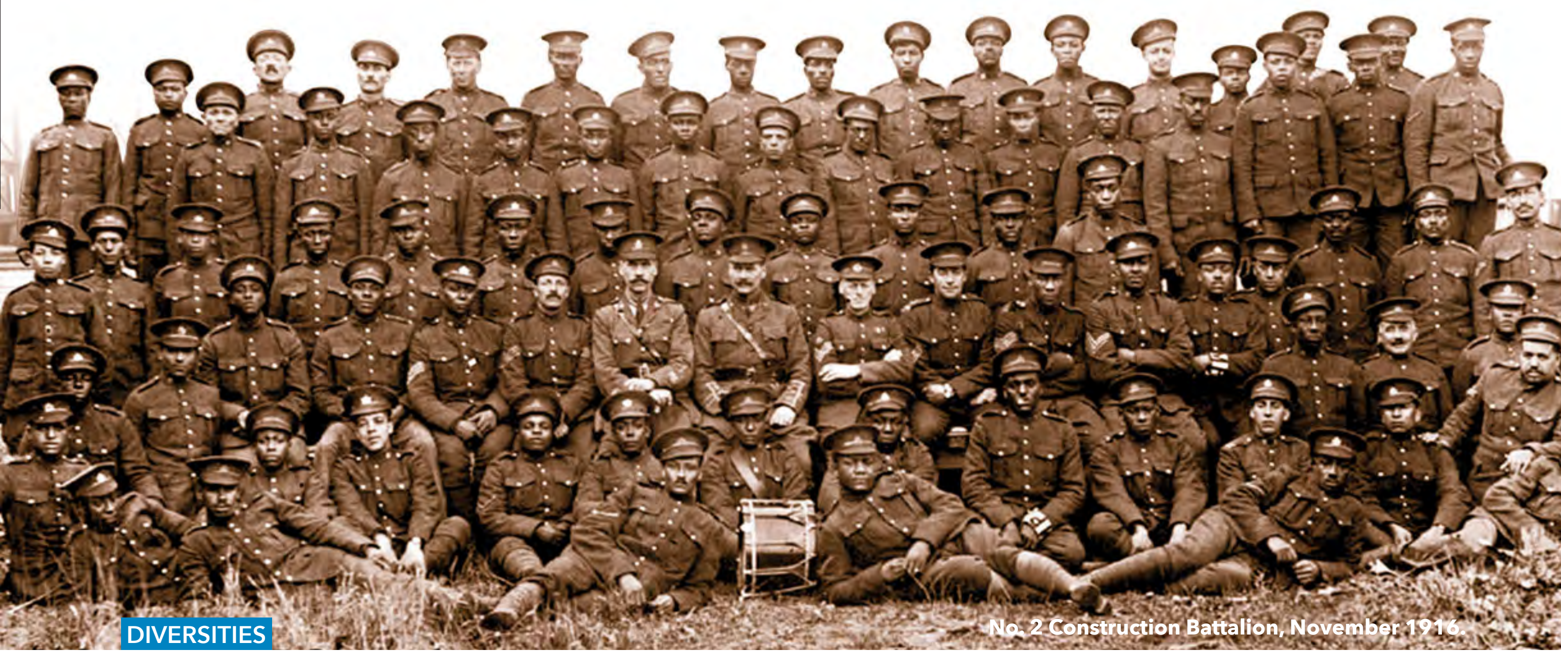

DIVERSITIES

No. 2 Construction Battalion, November 1916.

Banding together

The men of Canada's first segregated construction battalion overcame bigotry to serve their country. *by Craig Marshall Smith*

When the First World War began in 1914, black Canadian men responded to the call to arms.

Despite being willing to serve overseas, and contrary to official government policy, many potential recruits were told by unit commanding officers that black men were not wanted by the Canadian military.

As a result, the vast majority of black men were turned away. Despite this rejection, about fifteen hundred black men managed to enrol in the Canadian Expeditionary Force.

Rev. Dr. William A. White.

COURTESY BLACK CULTURAL SOCIETY & CENTRE OF NOVA SCOTIA

But black Canadians were determined to serve in greater numbers. Community leaders wrote letters of protest and approached local and federal politicians to make their voices heard.

Finally, with the help of supportive white Canadians, in 1916 the Canadian military responded by establishing a segregated construction battalion.

The black population of Canada at the time was about twenty thousand, with the majority (seven thousand) in Nova Scotia. On July 5, 1916, more than six hundred black recruits gathered at Pictou, Nova Scotia.

The community was chosen as a base for the unit in part because it was the closest town to the residence of Lieutenant Colonel Donald Sutherland, a prominent railroad contractor who had volunteered to form the battalion — provided he could do so close to home.

The No. 2 Construction Battalion was comprised of about 300 men from Nova Scotia, 125 from New Brunswick, Ontario, and the Prairies, 163 from the United States, and approximately 30 from the British West Indies. The battalion's mission was to support combat troops on the Western Front. It was one of three construction battalions Canada established during the war.

Although made up of black enlisted men, the unit's officers were white, with one notable exception: The battalion chaplain, the Reverend Dr. William A. White, was given the rank of honorary captain, making him the only black officer in the Canadian military during the First World War and one of only a handful in the entire British Empire.

The Black Battalion, as the unit was usually called, sailed to England in March 1917 before moving to southeastern France in May.

There, the men assisted four companies of the Canadian Forestry Corps in logging, milling, and shipping lumber. They also dug trenches, built railroads, repaired roads, and laid barbed wire for combat operations.

After the war ended, the battalion returned to Canada in January 1919 and was disbanded in September 1920. Canadian Senator Calvin Ruck in 1983 organized the first reunion and recognition event to honour the surviving members of the unit.

This was followed in 1986 with the publication of his book, *The Black Battalion 1916–1920: Canada's Best Kept Military Secret*. Since 1993 there have been annual celebrations in Pictou to honour the men of No. 2 Construction Battalion.

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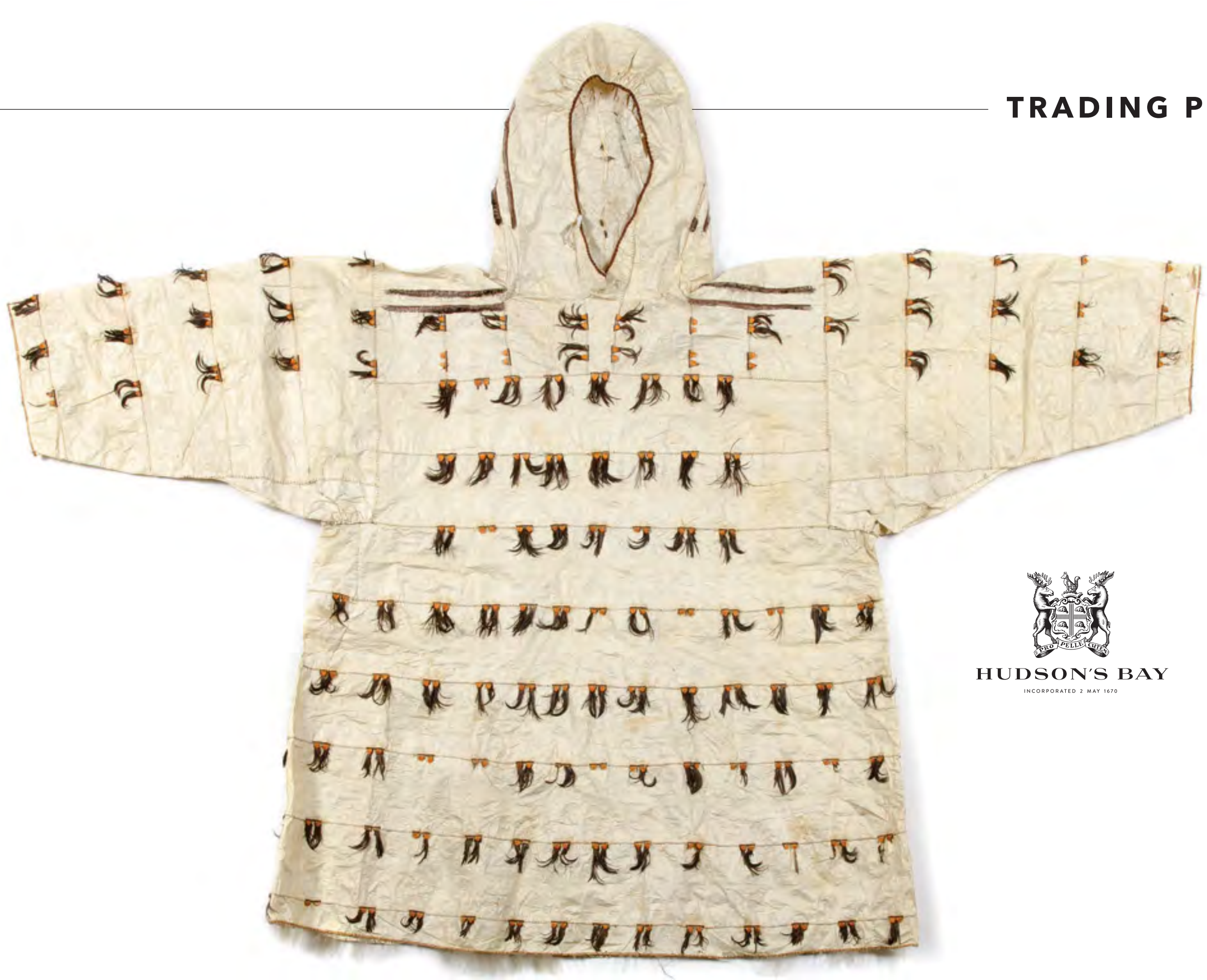

HUDSON'S BAY
INCORPORATED 2 MAY 1670

Inuit raincoat

Tales and Treasures from the rich legacy of the Hudson's Bay Company

Gut-skin raincoats are one of many examples of how indigenous peoples used all parts of the animals they hunted. This coat was made by sewing together strips of cleaned whale intestine with black thread, instead of the more traditional sinew (which would have increased the waterproofing, as sinew expands when wet, plugging the stitch holes).

Unlike the other gut-skin coat in the HBC museum collection (which is from the eastern Arctic), this one by the Mackenzie Delta Inuit has been elaborately decorated with tufts of crested auklet feathers and auklet beaks. Gut-skin raincoats were perfect for the wet and harsh Arctic environment, as they were more waterproof than regular fur garments. Raincoats were worn for kayaking, or for fishing in shallow tidal waters, and even in some ceremonies and dances. This gut-skin coat was donated to the collection, likely in the 1920s, by the post inspector for the northern Mackenzie River.
—Amelia Fay, curator of the HBC Collection at the Manitoba Museum

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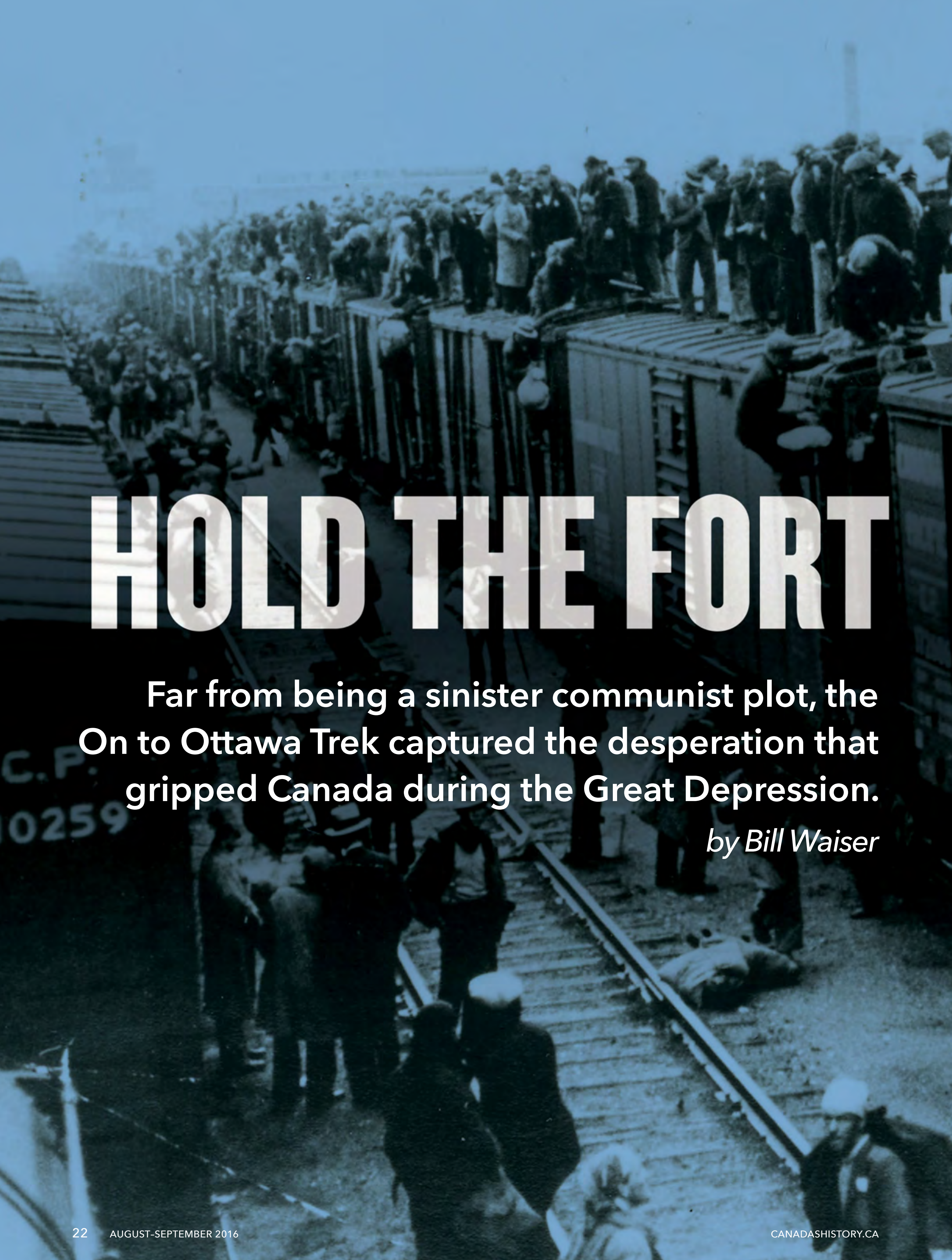
IN THE BEAVER ...

The June 1941 issue of *The Beaver* features stories of adventure and exploration, along with striking photographs of people, landscapes, and wildlife. Josephine Robertson's lead article, "By Sternwheeler to the Arctic," details a journey north from Edmonton to Lake Athabaska and then by steamer along the Mackenzie River. Another item presents first-hand accounts of the 1869–70 Red River resistance. And the story "Summer Ice," by Axel Neilsen, portrays the challenges faced by traders when travelling during the spring breakup. Photo essays show Arctic tern and ptarmigan near Churchill, Manitoba, as well as members of several First Nations, while letters from readers in North America and Europe lavish praise on the magazine. One called it "the grandest piece of cheer I know in these alarming times." There's even an article about Christopher Wren — besides being a famous London architect, he was a member of the Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay.

The Beaver magazine was originally founded as a Hudson's Bay Company publication in 1920. To read stories from past issues, go to **CanadasHistory.ca/TradingPost**. To explore the history of the Hudson's Bay Company, go to **hbcheritage.ca**, or follow HBC's Twitter and Instagram feeds at **@HBCHeritage**.

ARTIFACT FROM THE MANITOBA MUSEUM (HBC 1728) / PHOTO BY ANDREW WORKMAN



HOLD THE FORT

Far from being a sinister communist plot, the On to Ottawa Trek captured the desperation that gripped Canada during the Great Depression.

by Bill Waiser

It was early April 1935 — smack in the middle of the Great Depression — and the worst fears of Canadian authorities had begun to unfold. Hundreds of unemployed, disillusioned, young, single men were walking out of isolated Department of National Defence (DND) relief camps in British Columbia and were making their way to Vancouver. Sick and tired of working at hard labour for twenty cents a day, eight hours a day, under deplorable conditions — and with no end in sight — the men were determined to reverse their dead-end lives.

Their demands included a work-and-wages program, a fifty-cent-an-hour minimum wage, workers compensation, the right to vote for all camp workers, and an end to DND's control of the work camps.

The walkout, coordinated by the Communist Party-affiliated Relief Camp Workers' Union, was a direct challenge to the federal Conservative government of R.B. Bennett and its handling of the single, homeless, and unemployed during the Depression. Bennett's government, and the RCMP, looked upon dissent, no matter how peaceful or justified, as a possible communist threat to the country and its traditions.

Since his election in 1930, Bennett had tried to address the unprecedented economic collapse through traditional measures, such as protective tariffs. He opposed what he perceived as handouts. "Never will I or any government of which I am a part put a premium on idleness or put our people on the dole," he told a labour delegation asking for unemployment insurance in 1930.

A few years later, it was clear that his remedies weren't working. In October 1932, he reluctantly adopted a relief camp scheme to put unemployed men to work. Run by the military, the program began modestly but grew to include camps across the country.

In contrast to the American Civilian Conservation Corps, a popular federal work-for-relief program across the border, the make-work projects and isolating conditions of the Canadian relief camps aggravated the gloom of the men who were in them.

Unemployed men climb on board a train during the Depression.

CITY OF TORONTO ARCHIVES

Unemployed, homeless men in a field somewhere in Western Canada in the early 1930s — a common sight during the Great Depression.

GLENBOW ARCHIVES

In Vancouver, local authorities nervously looked on as about fifteen hundred unemployed men — dubbed strikers — arrived in the city in April 1935. They held huge public rallies, paraded in the streets, raised $5,500 in donations from citizens — an astounding amount for the time — in a single day, and even occupied a library to extract relief funds from the city. The most remarkable event was a Mother's Day gathering in Stanley Park, where about three hundred women encircled more than one thousand strikers, forming the shape of a heart. Meanwhile, the federal and provincial governments wrangled over who was responsible for the strikers.

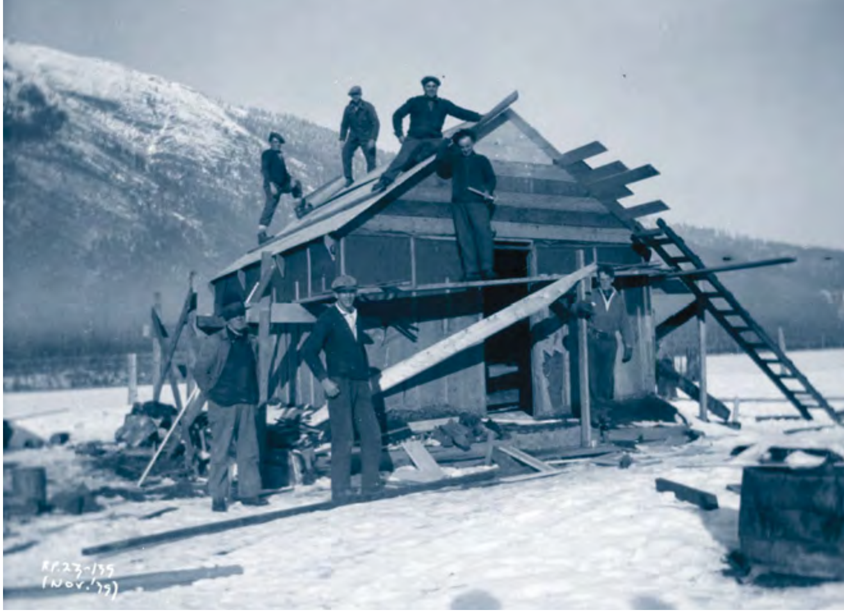
As the stalemate dragged on and strikers began slipping away, with some going back to the camps, it was suggested at a meeting that the men take their grievances to Ottawa and directly confront the Bennett government. This bold idea galvanized the strikers' flagging spirits.

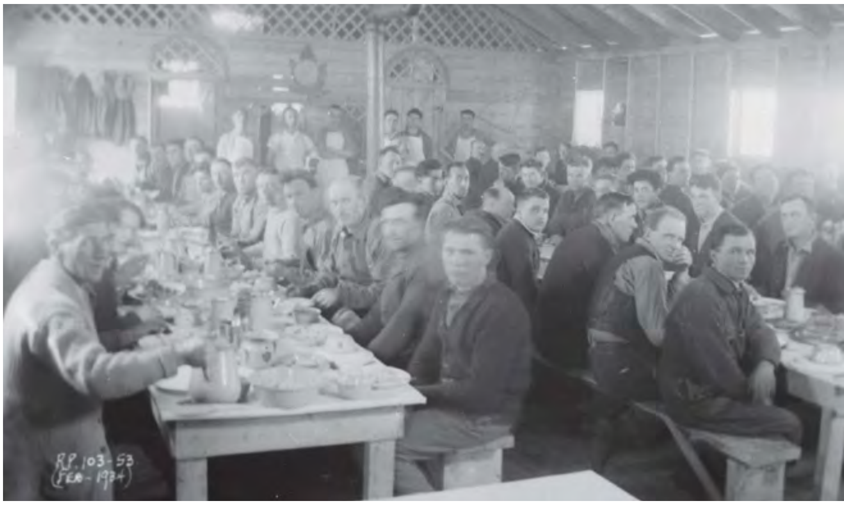
But the trek was a bigger gamble than the walkout. Ottawa was more than five thousand kilometres away, and the strikers would have to travel there atop boxcars. An estimated one thousand trekkers left Vancouver by freight train in early June 1935 in three separate contingents. No attempt was made to stop them. Authorities confidently assumed that the resolve of the men would melt away like the snow in the interior mountains. Even Prime Minister Bennett, convinced that the strikers had misplayed their hand, announced that his Conservative administration would simply watch from the sidelines.

The trek seemed likely to fulfill the gloomy predictions.

Although the train engineers tried to be as accommodating as possible — for instance, making frequent unscheduled stops to allow the men to urinate from atop the boxcars or to have a smoke — the same could not be said of the reception awaiting the men at their first stop, in Kamloops. Nothing had been done to prepare for their arrival; the mayor and chief of police had flatly refused requests for help.

"It was here that the breaking point was just about reached," trekker Ron Liversedge later remembered, "and the first time since our strike started that ... our self-discipline [was] thrown to the winds." The men scrambled to canvas the town for food and cash donations before settling down for the night in a local park. It was there, while the men were sitting around campfires, that one of them began playing the popular union song "Hold the Fort" on his concertina. One by one the men joined in to sing the words, until hundreds of voices were united in the stirring lyrics: "Hold the fort/ For we are coming/





Above right: Relief camp workers construct a new sleeping hut at a camp in Kitchener, British Columbia, in November 1935.
Below right: Mealtime at a Canadian relief camp in February 1934, location unknown.

LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA

Union men be strong./ Side by side keep pressing onward,/ Victory will come." It became their anthem for the rest of the trek.

After the near breakdown in Kamloops — and a situation that was little better in Revelstoke — the trek leadership redoubled their efforts to ensure that arrangements were in place to feed and house the men at a series of predetermined stops along the way. Their work paid off: When the men, shivering from the cold, detrained in Golden at four o'clock in the morning of Thursday, June 6, they were welcomed by a clutch of elderly women stirring washtubs of simmering stew in a nearby park. "I'll never forget that," trekker Red Walsh confessed years later. "I was so cold when I come [sic] off the roof of that boxcar I thought I was goin' to fall down." The hot meal was exactly what the trekkers needed to shake off their doldrums.

Although the trek had defied the odds and travelled seven hundred kilometres to make it as far as Golden, it had come at a cost — more than a hundred men had defected since Vancouver. If the trek was going to build some momentum, organization and discipline were paramount. Trek leaders consequently used the day in Golden to strike various committees to ensure that the trek ran as smoothly as possible. They also drilled into the men that they would never reach their goal, never get to Ottawa, unless they came together as a unit. They were no longer an aimless group of individuals, hitching a ride on a train, headed for nowhere; they were men with a cause — and a mission.

But the upbeat mood of the men on leaving Golden was short-lived: Ahead of them were the dreaded spiral tunnels of the Kicking Horse Pass. For the first time, there were genuine fears for the safety of the men. The two tunnels, each about a kilometre long, cut through the mountains and spiralled around and underneath themselves like a giant corkscrew. Inside the tunnels, there was the threat of asphyxiation from a lack of oxygen and the poisonous smoke from the steam engine.

The train was deliberately stopped outside Field while the men were cautioned about the danger ahead. Some placed wet handkerchiefs over their faces; a lucky few had goggles. All clung tightly to the catwalk that ran along the top of the boxcars as the freight train groaned around the curves in the pitch dark. "It was hot in the tunnels," trekker Irven Schwartz recalled. "First there was a blast of cold, and then a real blast of heat, and finally the smoke came back. You think you're not going to live." In the late afternoon of Friday, June 7, the Canadian Pacific Railway train, with its human cargo, rumbled out of British Columbia and down into

WE WANT TO BE
CITIZENS
not
TRANSIENTS
FOR-JOBS
AND
FUTURE

Above: Unemployed men march in Toronto during the Great Depression.
Below: A dust storm approaches the town of Lomond, Alberta, in the 1930s.

TOP: LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA. BOTTOM: GLENBOW ARCHIVES

the foothills into Calgary.

The trekkers, or "tourists," as they were jokingly called in the local newspapers, were scheduled to spend the weekend in the prime minister's home riding. But all that an advance party was able to secure at a special city council meeting was the use of the exhibition grandstand to house the men. The Calgary mayor offered no bedding, no soap or towels, and no food. The trekkers responded by washing off their soot and grime in the Elbow River and then holding an illegal tag day — soliciting donations in the street — on Saturday morning.

When the Calgary police did nothing to stop the men from collecting money, they became even bolder and laid siege to the downtown office of the Alberta Relief Commission — until provincial officials agreed to provide meals for the next few days.

Initially wary of the trekkers and their motives, Calgary citizens were struck by the innocent youthfulness of the men. "We had reports that these strikers were a rough bunch," one bystander told a reporter, "but when we saw how orderly and well-behaved they were everyone warmed up to them." About a thousand citizens attended a rally at the exhibition grounds, cheering and applauding as they listened to speakers explain the reasons for the trek.

By the time the men left Calgary on Monday evening, the trek had taken on the aura of a crusade. What began as a strike against federal relief camps had been transformed into a popular movement against the federal government's handling of the Depression. This message was not lost on the communities that welcomed the men like modern-day folk heroes as they headed east on their mission.

Police, military, and government authorities, in the meantime, decided that the trek had to be stopped. It was one thing for the trekkers to rail against federal relief policies, but it was quite another matter when their protest was attracting growing public interest, if not support. New recruits had climbed aboard in Alberta, and more were expected to join. Moved by a sense of urgency, the Bennett government drew up plans to stop the trek.

Meanwhile, the trekkers confronted more immediate concerns. No sooner had the freight left for their next stop in Alberta — Medicine Hat — than a stiff wind blew up and rain began to fall in torrents. The men atop the boxcars huddled together to try to stay warm, but their blankets and clothes were soon drenched. Whenever the train stopped during the night, a group quickly gathered around the huge pistons of the locomotive in an attempt to warm their chilled bodies.

The mayor of Medicine Hat tried to discourage the trek from stopping in his city by offering two hundred dollars if it just kept going. But the leadership turned down the bribe. Ever since the men had emerged from the mountains, there was a real sense that they were going to make it to Ottawa — with growing support and more recruits as the trek made its way eastward. "I thought we were makin' history," bragged Red Walsh. "No doubt about that." This belief that they were part of something special forged a bond among the men, a steely enthusiasm that not even a night of cold, driving rain could dampen.

While the men were in Medicine Hat — near the Saskatchewan border but still in Alberta — plans were taking shape to halt the trek. On June 11, Saskatchewan Premier James Gardiner was personally advised by Regina-based RCMP Assistant Commissioner S. T. Wood that the trek would be stopped in Regina. Later that day, the premier received a telegram from W.A. Mather of the CPR declaring the men to be trespassers and asked for the "assistance and co-operation of your government."

An incredulous Gardiner protested the federal decision. If the trekkers had been in violation of the Railways Act, why had they not been stopped earlier? The Liberal premier fired off a telegram to Bennett to say, "if there is any trouble while these outsiders are in Saskatchewan we will hold you responsible." And a few days later, in a June 17 telegram to the federal minister of justice, Gardiner warned, "in our opinion your action may result in causing a riot in this province endangering life and property."

It was not the first time during the Depression that the RCMP had been used in Saskatchewan to quell difficult situations. In September 1931, the Mounties sparked a riot by intercepting a peaceful march by striking coal miners and their families in Estevan. The police shot to death three men. In May 1933, the RCMP started another riot by forcibly trying to remove "troublemakers" from the Saskatoon relief camp. In that incident, one officer died when he fell from his horse and struck his head.

The trek took to the rails again on the morning of Wednesday, June 12, and reached Swift Current, Saskatchewan, shortly after noon. Most of the town turned out to witness the train's arrival. So too did Charles Woodsworth, a newspaper reporter disguised as a transient. The *Winnipeg Tribune* had sent Woodsworth — the son of J.S. Woodsworth, founder of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation — to Swift Current to join the trek, and the organization of the men made quite a first impression.

> "I expected them to swarm across the tracks and invade Swift Current like a mob," he confessed. "Instead, they formed fours immediately on descending from the cars."

"I expected them to swarm across the tracks and invade Swift Current like a mob," he confessed. "Instead, they formed fours immediately on descending from the cars, waited until all sections of the hobo army were ready, and then marched town-wards in real army style."

It was in Swift Current that the trek leaders first learned of the government's decision to stop the trek in Regina. It was undoubtedly on their minds as they boarded a waiting freight train. This time, though, they had company. The boxcars were loaded with horses and cattle. As the hundreds of men took their positions above them, the frightened animals neighed, bellowed, and stomped.

THE LOST YEARS OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION

1.5 MILLION Number of Canadians surviving on relief in 1933.

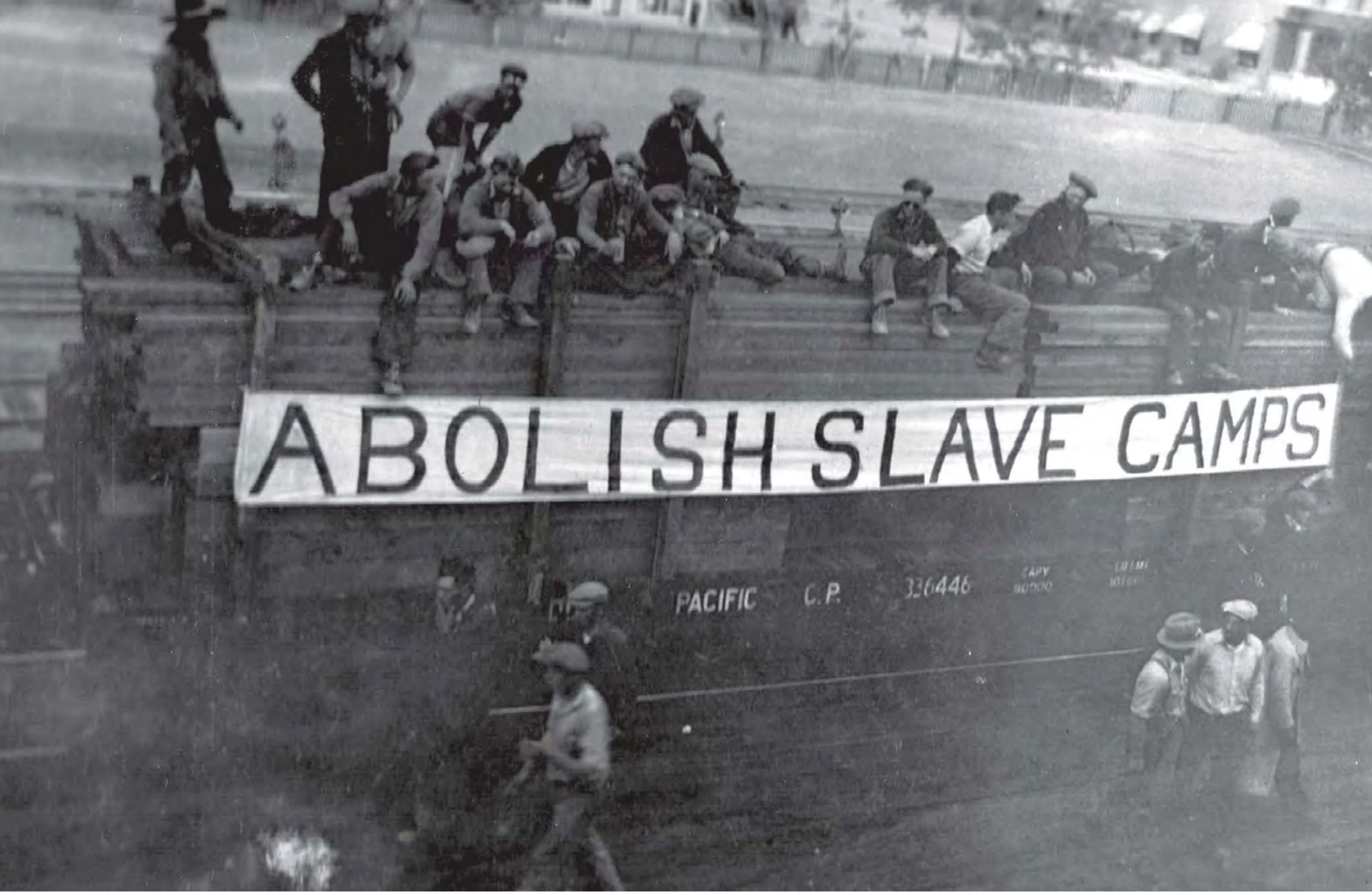
359 Number of strikes, demonstrations, and disturbances in the four-year history of the relief camps.

10 Years of economic hardship.

72 Percentage drop in average income in Saskatchewan from 1929 to 1933.

170,248 Number of men who spent time in the relief camps.

3 Number of times the RCMP provoked deadly riots in dealing with unrest in Saskatchewan, the epicentre of the Depression.



Unemployed men on the On to Ottawa Trek display a sign with one of their demands. The Department of National Defence relief camps were called "slave camps" by those who worked in them for twenty cents a day.

ON TO OTTAWA SOCIETY

The trekkers — now numbering about 1,350 — rode into Moose Jaw just before sundown on June 12. By this time, the public had cast aside its fear of the army of transient rail riders. Large crowds formed at railway crossings and overpasses, boisterously cheering on the trekkers as they passed. The men shouted and waved back, their teeth gleaming from faces darkened by coal dust and smoke.

On one level, the trek had become a travelling road show. It is quite likely that many in the crowds in Moose Jaw that evening had come to catch a glimpse of the men before the looming showdown in Regina. But, on another level, the trek resonated with Depression-weary Western Canadians in a way no other event had since their world had been turned upside-down.

However, the view from Parliament Hill, 2,700 kilometres away, was very different. To the Bennett administration the trek was a revolution on wheels — an army of single, homeless, unemployed men with nothing to lose, under the control of communist masters. To make matters worse, the army was growing. Labour organizations were throwing their support behind the rail riders: about a thousand relief camp workers were gathering in Winnipeg, prepared to join the trek if it came through.

Thursday, June 13, was a rainy day in Moose Jaw. Most of the trekkers spent their time at the exhibition grounds, huddling in small groups in the stands or underneath them, talking and smoking, while waiting for a decision from the strike committee about their next move.

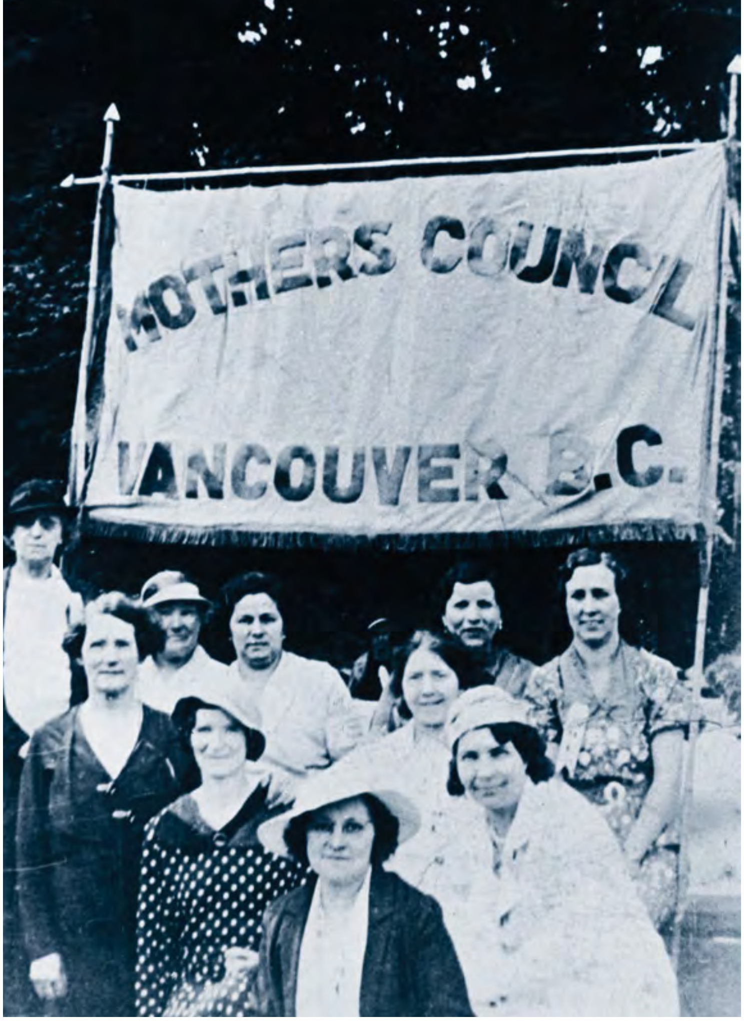
That afternoon, three thousand citizens and trekkers filled the grandstand for a public rally that was held, ostensibly, to thank the city for its support. But the real purpose was to tell the Bennett government to keep its hands off the trek. Trek leader Paddy O'Neill announced to the enthusiastic roar of the trekkers: "We are going through with the march, and we don't care if we have to go in our stockinged feet."

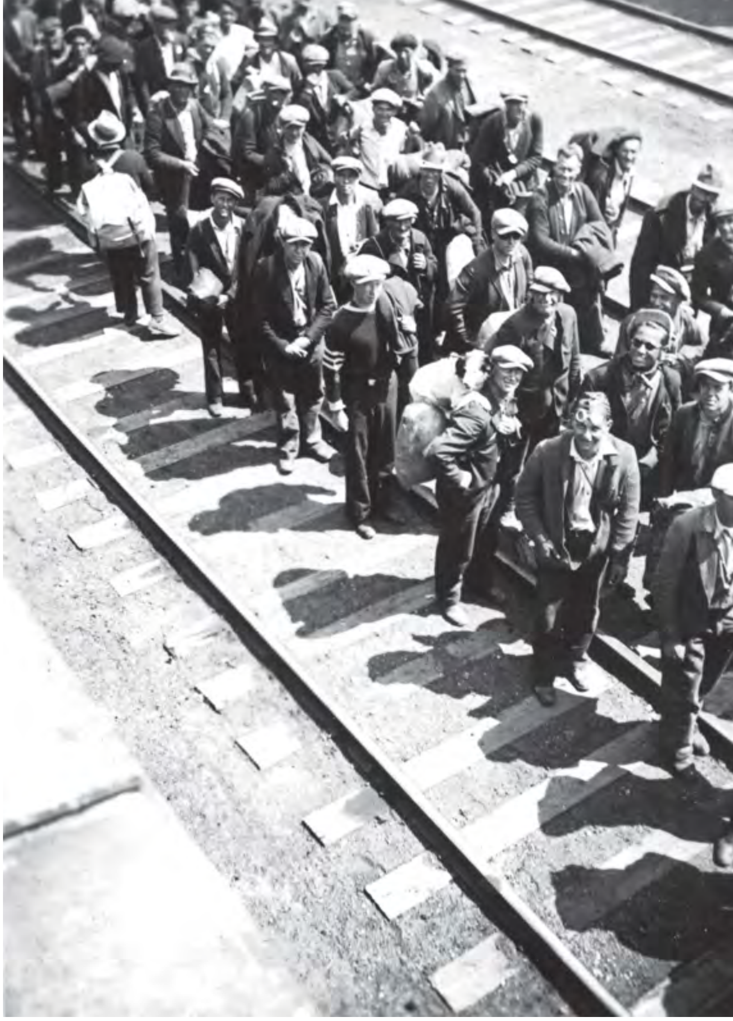
At a closed mass meeting that evening, the trek leaders talked in detail for the first time about the blockade in Regina and what would be expected of the men. They sternly cautioned them that any "monkey business" or hooliganism on the trains or in the streets would lead to expulsion. At 12:30 a.m., after waiting for what seemed to be an eternity in the mud-filled park, the trekkers were called into formation and marched to the train station.

There, they patiently waited two more hours in steady rain until their freight was finally ready, and they struggled aboard for the seventy-kilometre trip to Regina. By now they numbered about fifteen hundred. The scene was eerily reminiscent of their departure from Vancouver ten days earlier — setting off in the night, with no one to see them off, and uncertain as to how far they would get.

At least one thing had been settled: There would be no turning back.

The trekkers reached Regina early on Friday, June 14. There, the mood was tense. "Hurried conferences were held all day yesterday between Premier Gardiner, cabinet ministers, police officials, and civil heads," reported the *Ottawa Citizen*, which also noted, "Orders from Ottawa to Royal Canadian Mounted Police officials here to halt the trek brought a demand from J.G. Gardiner of Saskatchewan that Prime Minister R.B. Bennett 'keep his hands





Left: Women in Vancouver hold a Mother's Day picnic in support of the On to Ottawa trekkers.
Right: Trekkers stand in formation as they wait to board their train. Disclipline was one of the hallmarks of the trek.

LEFT: GLENBOW ARCHIVES. RIGHT: SWIFT CURRENT MUSEUM

off the policing of this province.'"

The train was met by members of the RCMP, who escorted the men to their new temporary home at the Regina exhibition grounds. A coalition of sympathetic Regina groups accommodated the needs of the men, including food, fundraising, and a variety of public events. Meanwhile, a delegation of trek leaders travelled by train to Ottawa in an attempt to negotiate with the government. The fruitless result was summed up in a two-line memo that the CPR flashed to its offices across the country on June 22: "Prime Minister told Regina Committee nothing doing. Go back to your camps."

For the next two weeks in the Saskatchewan capital, the police and the trekkers played a tense game of brinkmanship, daring each other to make the first move. Near the end of June, the number of trekkers had grown to about two thousand. However, the men grudgingly conceded that there was no way out of Regina. An attempt to move some of the strikers out by truck was quickly stopped by the RCMP. At the same time, the RCMP warned civilians that they would be prosecuted if they provided assistance to the trekkers.

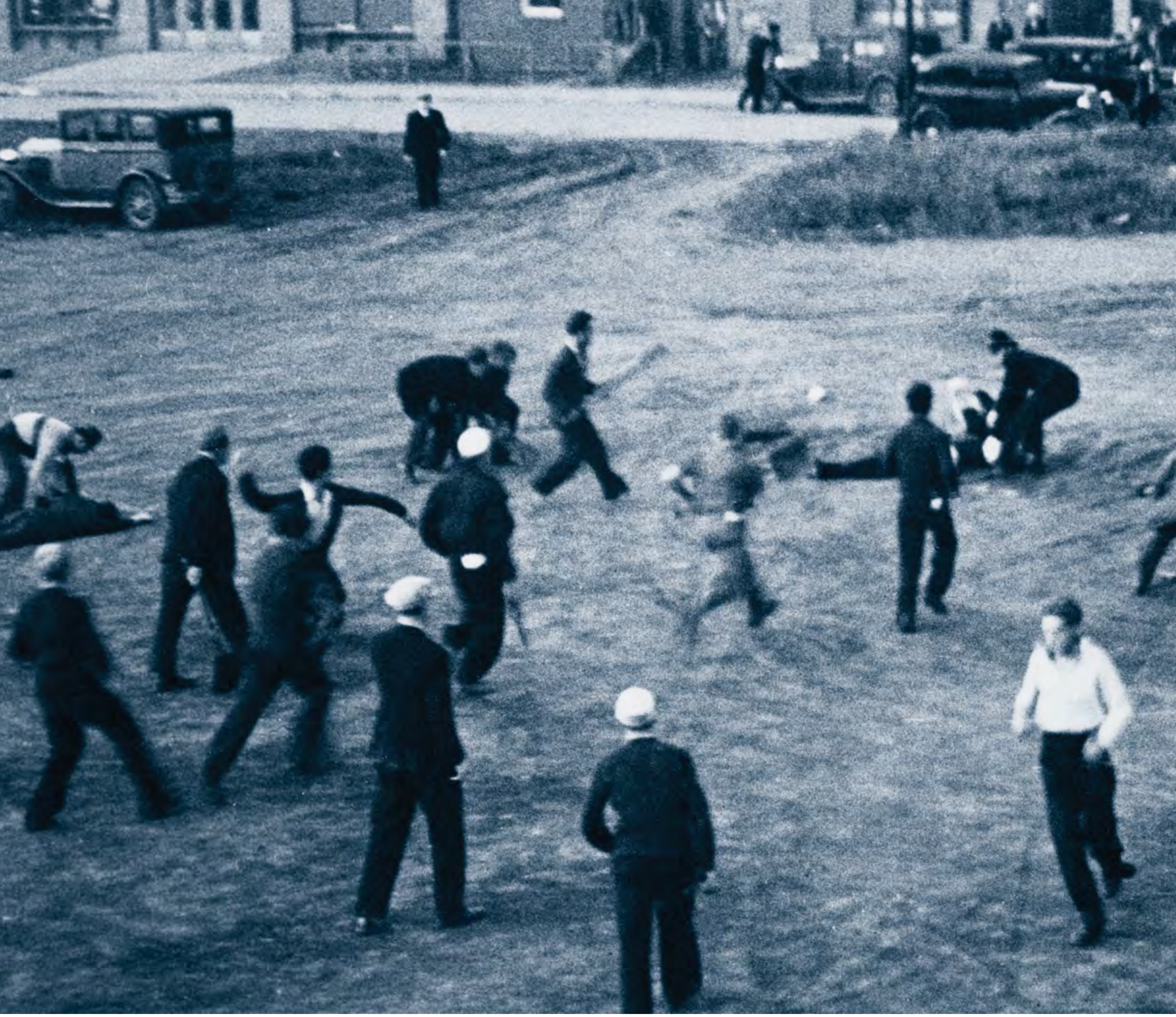
There seemed to be no way to end the impasse peacefully. The trekkers were agreeable to leaving Regina and going back to their respective camps or their homes — but only under the direction of their own organization. The Bennett government, however, insisted that the trek be disbanded on its terms — through a special holding facility on the outskirts of the city. The men balked at the proposal, seeing it as a trap.

On the evening of July 1 — Dominion Day — the strikers held a mass meeting at Market Square in the city's centre. Estimates of how many were there range from twelve hundred to three thousand. More than half were local citizens. None realized that the Mounties and the city police had chosen this rally to arrest the trek ringleaders while clearing the square by force, if necessary. Even Premier Gardiner, who had met with strike leaders earlier in the day, was unaware of the plan.

At 8:17 p.m., just as one of the speakers finished addressing the orderly crowd, the shrill sound of a police whistle pierced the air. Thirty-one club-wielding city police officers sprang from their hiding places to charge the speakers' platform and arrest the trek organizers. "The policemen went slam bang into the crowd," witness Allen Miller told a provincial inquiry held later that year. "I saw people being knocked over." One older woman fell and broke her leg. Another woman was clubbed on the back as she tried to help an elderly woman who had fallen. Even a baby carriage was bumped in the melee.

As the Regina police rushed through the crowd, two Mountie units also sprang into action and charged into the square. The raid quickly degenerated into a pitched battle between the police and trekkers and citizens. An unfortunate number of police officers became separated from their troops and were surrounded by angry mobs. One Mountie was pinned to the ground as two trekkers viciously punched him about the head and torso. The police were equally brutal, with many reports of groups of police officers holding trekkers down and beating them with clubs.

People fled the square, but trekkers and some civilians, including women, regrouped on nearby streets and threw rocks and bricks at



Rioters carrying sticks and throwing rocks run towards a police officer who is bending over a person on the ground during the Dominion Day riot in Regina in 1935. The violence began when police stormed a rally to arrest leaders of the On to Ottawa Trek.

GLENBOW ARCHIVES

police. Mounties on horseback appeared, armed with long leather truncheons and protected by metal helmets. They charged at pockets of resistance, yelling all the while as if they were pushing cattle.

People gasped as clouds of tear gas filled the downtown. Store windows decorated with Dominion Day bunting and flags were shattered by brick-wielding rioters. Thousands of curious citizens emerged from cafés, theatres, and homes to watch what was going on. “I must say,” Colonel Wood reported later, “that spectators were the greatest hindrance to us in the course of our operations.” Two hours after the riot began, shots echoed through the streets as city police officers emptied their revolvers directly into a crowd of stone-throwing rioters. Ambulances rushed the wounded to hospital. Order was not restored until after midnight. Dawn broke on a desolate scene of streets littered with shards of glass, broken bricks, twisted metal, and pools of blood.

Two people died. One of them was city police detective Charles Millar, who was clubbed on the head. The other was Nick Schaack, a farmhand, who, at fifty-two, was one of the older trekkers. Schaack died three and a half months later, due to complications from a head injury sustained during the melee. In addition, hundreds of people were injured, and the city sustained tens of thousands of dollars worth of damage. Of the 118 men arrested, 38 were charged, and nine were convicted and sentenced.

Sadly, Premier Gardiner’s earlier warning — that stopping the trek would result in a riot — had come true. Seething with anger, he told federal authorities his government would feed and house the strikers and then move them west and back to their relief camps or their homes.

The day after the riot, Bennett spoke at length in the House of Commons, defending his government’s actions: “This movement is … not a mere uprising against law and order but a revolutionary effort.” Three months later, in the thick of an election campaign, he was promising radical reforms, such as health and unemployment insurance as well as a minimum wage. But it was to no avail. In

October 1935, Liberal leader William Lyon Mackenzie King overwhelmingly defeated Bennett.

Less than a year later, the relief camps were closed. But for many of the hopeless men who lived in them and took part in the protest, the trek had provided a purpose. Far from being a sinister communist plot, the march eastward captured a profound sense of the crisis that gripped the country during the 1930s. The stories of the trekkers — and their feelings of failure and despair — could have been the stories of many other ordinary Canadians. They just wanted to live ordinary lives.

Jean McWilliam of Calgary clearly understood this. In a letter to Alice Millar, Bennett's private secretary, dated two days after the Regina Riot, McWilliams wrote: "These boys who went thro Calgary seemed to be a very fine type of boys.... And I am heartily sorry for them. To me it is ... a lost generation."

// Learn more at CanadasHistory.ca/OnToOttawaTrek

THE AFTER-EFFECTS OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION

ATTITUDE TO UNEMPLOYMENT

The Depression changed the view of unemployment from being the fault of the individual to a social phenomena requiring government action.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

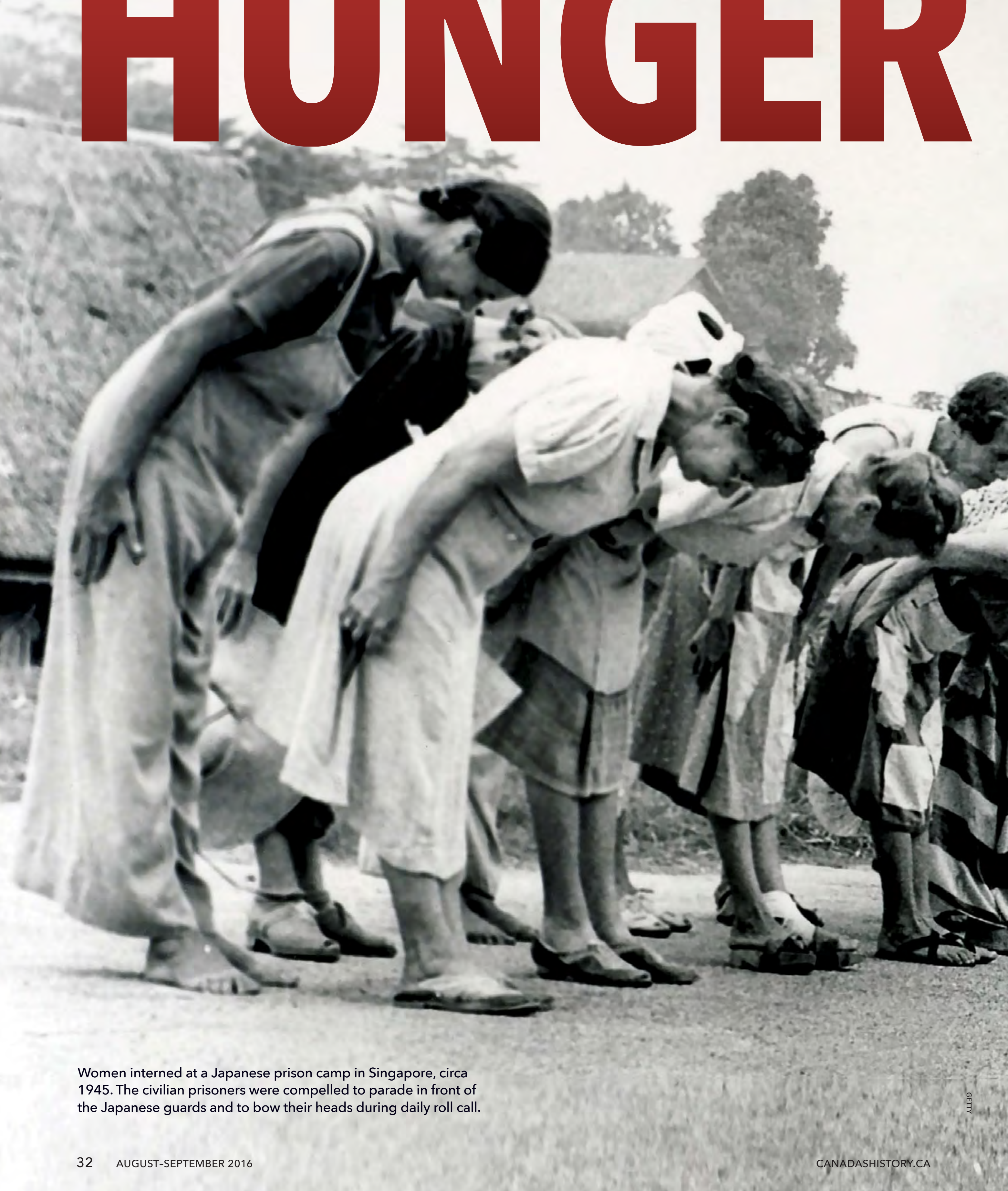
First proposed as a federal program in 1935, it was struck down as unconstitutional because it was considered a provincial responsibility. By 1940, a constitutional amendment allowed for the implementation of the federal Unemployment Insurance Act.

MEDICARE During the Depression most Canadians could not pay for medical help. Doctors often received payment in the form of goods, not cash. Beginning in the 1930s, various public and private insurance schemes were tried. Eventually, Ottawa legislated universal medicare, which was passed in 1966 and implemented in 1968.

MARKETING BOARDS During the Depression, farmers suffered greatly from a drop in the price of wheat – from $1.03 a bushel in 1928 to twenty-six cents a bushel in 1932. The Canadian Wheat Board was established in 1935 to assist farmers in bringing their grain to international markets and to establish a minimum price for wheat. The wheat board marketing monopoly was ended in 2012. However, marketing boards for other agricultural products remain.

LAND CONSERVATION The Depression coincided with a drought on the prairies, turning much of the region into a dust bowl. The federal government established the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA) in 1935 to create remedial programs, such as shelter belts, strip farming, and community pastures. After seventy-seven years of the program's operation, Ottawa announced in 2012 that it was cutting the PFRA. Conservation groups want the current government to reinstate it.

HUNGER

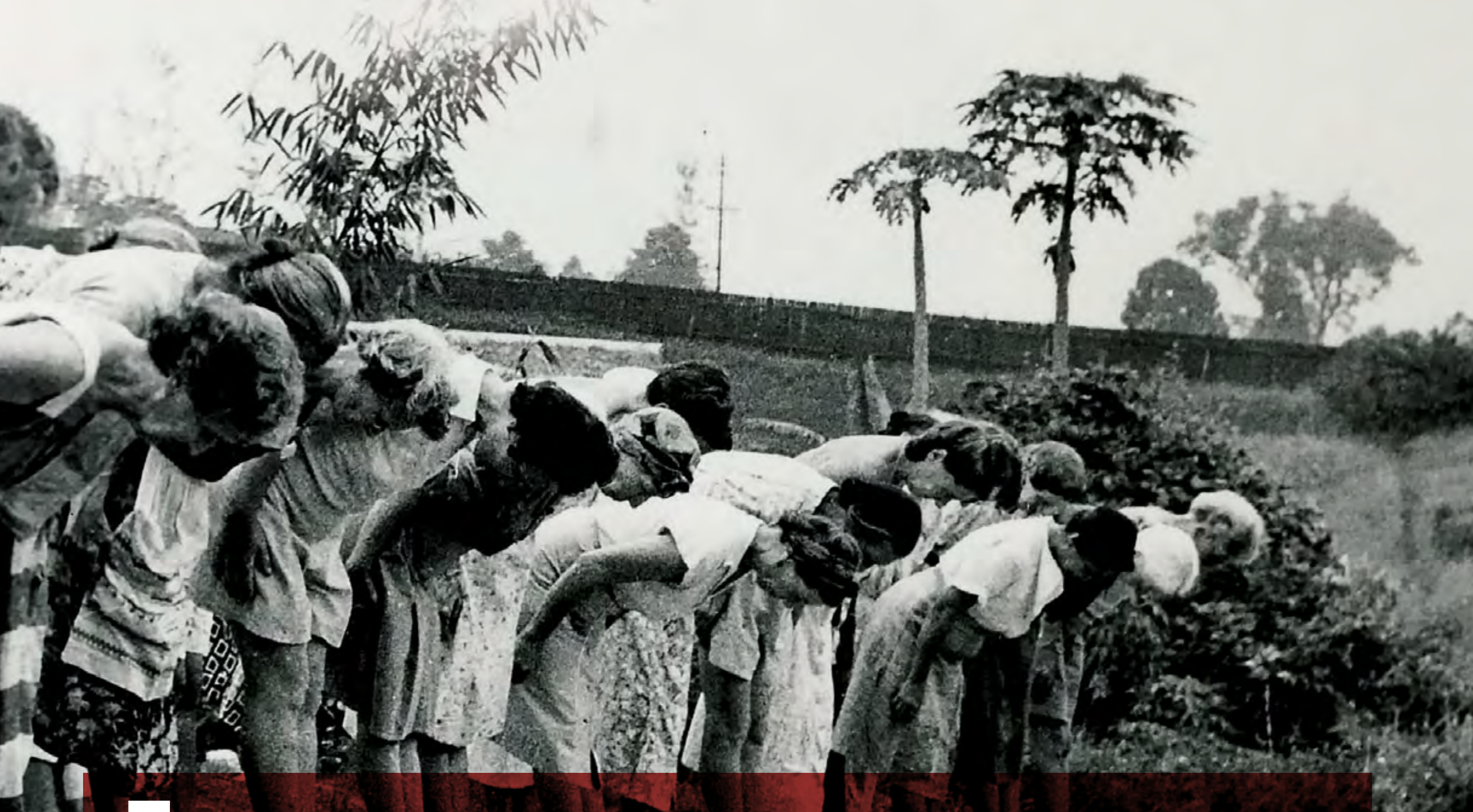


Women interned at a Japanese prison camp in Singapore, circa 1945. The civilian prisoners were compelled to parade in front of the Japanese guards and to bow their heads during daily roll call.

GETTY

PARTIES

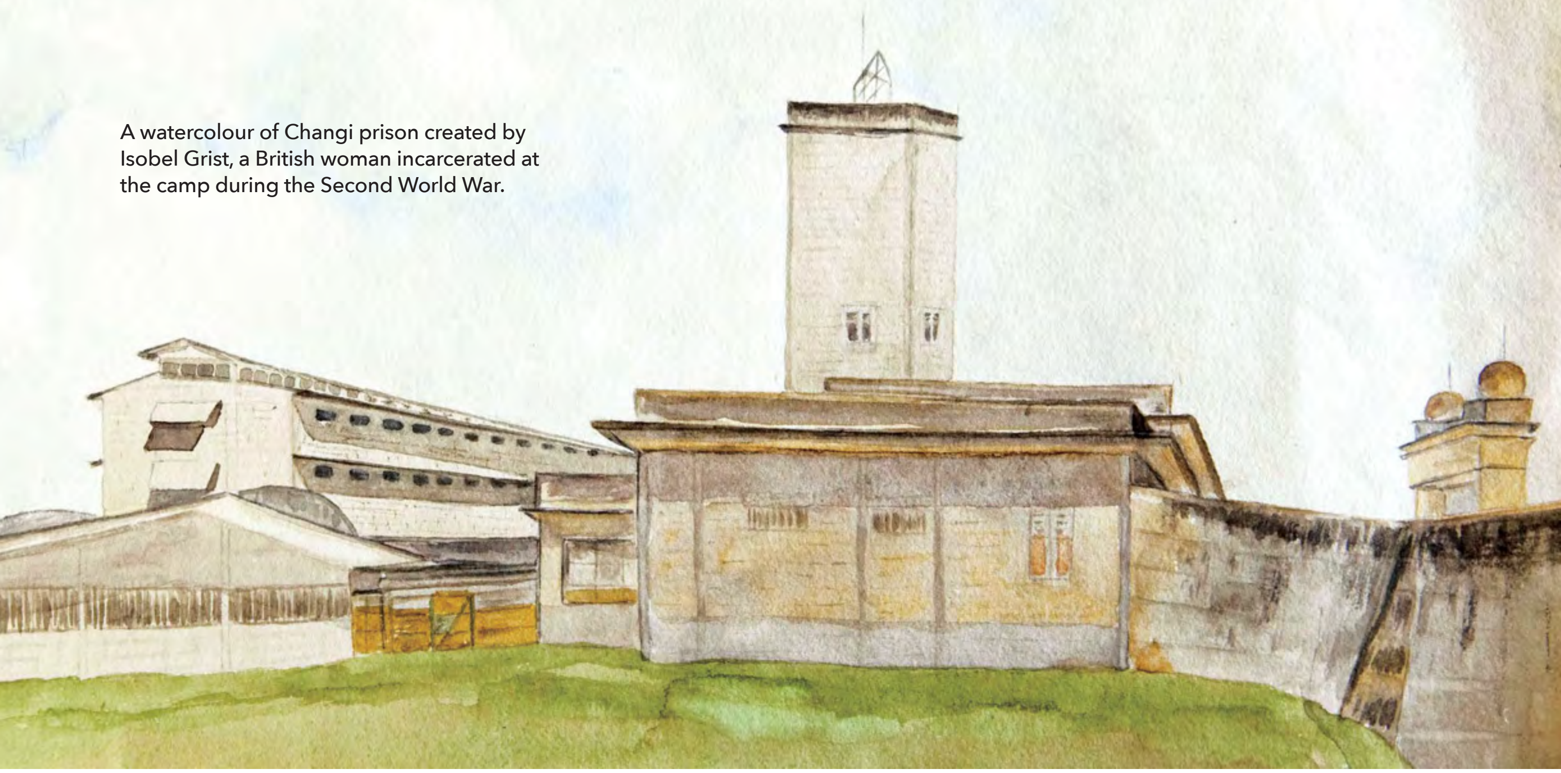
How a Canadian woman raised the morale of fellow civilian prisoners in a Japanese Second World War internment camp. *by Lorraine Mallinder*



It's the early 1940s in wartorn Singapore. We join a group of women dressed to the nines in fashionable tea dresses, hair done up in victory rolls. They've just sat down to lunch at an immaculately laid table. At the centre is a bouquet of daisies with sprigs of fern and a basket of bread with a crisp brown crust. Conversation flows and glasses tinkle.

Except, there are no glasses. Nor crockery, nor cutlery. The bread and the bouquet of flowers do not exist either. They are all figments of the women's imaginations. Shabbily dressed and stick-thin, some have sores on their skin and swollen feet — clear signs of malnutrition. Yet, here they are, on the verge of starvation, discussing the ultimate recipe for treacle sponge pudding.

From 1942 to 1945, these women were imprisoned by the Japanese in Singapore's notorious Changi internment camp. Their perverse tea parties were a survival tactic dreamt up by Canadian prisoner Ethel Rogers Mulvany. According to Mulvany's memoirs, the exercise in make-believe served the practical purpose of stimulating the saliva glands, helping to stave off relief from hunger pains, a condition that was known to precede death. "We would think and we would swallow saliva," she later wrote, her memories of Changi still fresh long after her return to Canada.



A watercolour of Changi prison created by Isobel Grist, a British woman incarcerated at the camp during the Second World War.

CP IMAGES

Originally from Ontario's Manitoulin Island, Mulvany followed her British doctor husband to Singapore in 1940. Energetic and strong-willed, she was volunteering as an aid worker with the Australian Red Cross when the island was invaded by the Japanese on December 8, 1941.

It was under the Canadian woman's guidance that fellow prisoners — the majority were British, but there were also inmates from Australia, New Zealand, the United States, the Netherlands, and other countries — debated the ingredients needed for their imaginary dishes. They faithfully transcribed nearly eight hundred recipes for cakes, pies, roasts, soups, and fish dishes into two large prison ledgers. Upon her return to Canada in 1946, Mulvany had twenty thousand copies of the book printed, raising $18,000 to help former prisoners of war who were hospitalized in Britain.

Today, a rare original copy of the *Prisoner of War Cookbook* resides at the Canadian War Museum, its cover ragged around the edges, its typewritten pages yellowed with time.

Rescued from oblivion by the work of Ottawa historian Suzanne Evans, the cookbook was republished by the Manitoulin Historical Society in 2013.

The cookbook, however, is not the only thing for which Mulvany is remembered. While at Changi, she also initiated other projects that kept up the spirits of her fellow prisoners and ensured that their suffering would not be forgotten.

On the day Singapore fell to the Japanese — February 15, 1942 — Ethel Mulvany, according to her memoirs, was speeding the wounded to hospital by amulance, "accelerators right to the floorboards" in the "hideous slam bang horror of battle." Later in the day, she surrendered her vehicle and joined hundreds of other civilian captives as they marched to Changi jail. The Japanese capture of Singapore had caught the British army unawares. From Mulvany's bluntly worded memoirs, which rail against "the pettiness, the jealousies … the absolute cowardice" of military top brass, we can imagine her fury at the British army as she entered the prison camp.

Changi, a district in eastern Singapore, had a notorious prison that held civilians during the Second World War. Originally built by the British colonial authorities to hold 600 people, the complex was crowded with about 1,000 women, 330 children and 1,100 men. Conditions were even worse at a nearby barracks in Changi called Selarang. Built for 800, Selarang held as many as 17,000 thousand Allied prisoners of war.

Most of the women prisoners were wives or daughters of diplomats and came from lives of ease and privilege. Many were mothers accompanied by young children, whom they somehow had to care for. They were crammed into bug-infested cells, with little more than "bubu," a tasteless mixture of rice and water, for sustenance, and their new living conditons were quite a shock. As fellow prisoner Sheila Bruhn (née Allan), author of *Diary of a Girl in Changi*, wrote, prisoners had to learn to "bow wow wow" under threat of "a clout on the head, a bayonet … thrust in front of you or even a kick on the backside that could send you sprawling onto your face."

Stepping up to the mark, Mulvany appointed herself Red Cross representative, a title never recognised by the Japanese, which nonetheless ended up winning her some freedoms — albeit temporarily — such as driving a battle-scarred army truck out of the camp to sell the women's jewellery and buy extra food to supplement their meagre diet. While out on these trips, she would buy items such as "weevily dog biscuits" to keep the women's hunger pangs at bay.

In a written interview from New South Wales, Australia, Bruhn remembered that Mulvany also bought rolls of fabric so that the women could make clothing for themselves and their children.

Mulvany's leadership role did not go down well with everyone. As prisoners adapted to life in the camp, establishing a pecking order that reflected colonial society, the audacious Canadian may have been seen as acting above her station. Bruhn remembered that Mulvany was seen as a "bossy" and "overbearing" character, but that "perhaps the women were jealous because she had the opportunity to go outside the prison and ... [they] felt the Japanese officials were favouring her." Nonetheless, the controversial Mulvany rose above the interpersonal tensions to embark on an ingenious venture. During the first nine months of internment, female prisoners were forbidden from communicating with their menfolk in the adjoining prison. In some cases, they did not know if their loved ones were even alive. It was Mulvany who hit upon a novel means of communication after seeing a project carried out by a group of Girl Guides in the camp.

The girls had secretly been meeting once a week in a corner of the exercise yard, where they clandestinely sewed a patchwork quilt as a surprise birthday present for their guide leader. One of the Girl Guides was Olga Henderson (née Morris), who was ten years old at the time. "It was being naughty, but we were enjoying it," she said in an interview with the BBC in 2015. "The Japanese didn't like anything unusual."

Mulvany saw the potential to advance the quilt-making project by including secret messages. As Bernice Archer, a British historian, recounts in her book *A Patchwork of Internment*, each woman was given a square of rice sack and instructed by Mulvany to put "something of themselves" on it. Three quilts were made. The first, dedicated to the Japanese Red Cross, with images of the Rising Sun and Mount Fuji, was designed to flatter their captors and to pave the way for second and third quilts, dedicated to the British and Australian Red Cross, respectively. Subtle, coded messages were sewn onto the squares. All were sent to a craft fair organized by the civilian men in their section of the camp in September 1942.

For the men imprisoned next door, the initialled patchwork squares, with their very personal images — flowers, cells, a clock with wings, and even a mother rabbit with a baby rabbit wearing a blue ribbon collar to indicate that a son had been born in prison — were the first signs that wives, sweethearts, sisters, mothers, and children were still alive. "The information was used to say 'all well,'" said Henderson, who returned to England after the war.

The quilts were "alive with sentiments of love and encouragement," said Bruhn, who embroidered a map of Australia on her square. Brought up in Malaya, the Eurasian teenager had been keen to let her Australian father know that she intended to go back to his homeland someday, in accordance with his wishes. Heartbreakingly, as recorded in her diary, he died three months before liberation.

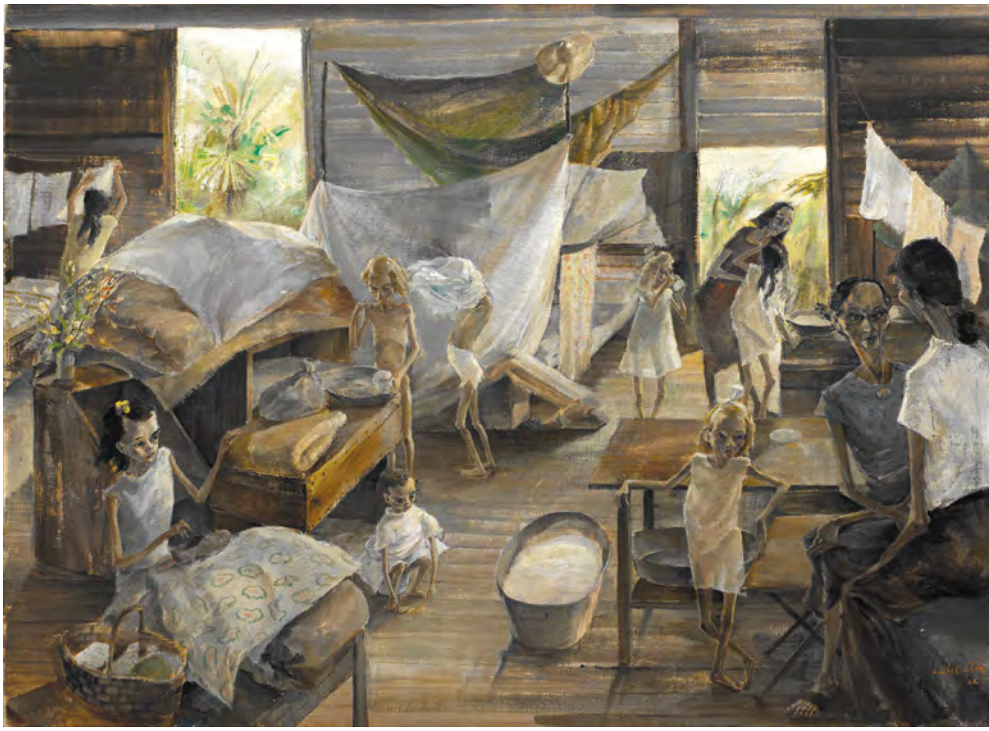
"If it had not been for Ethel, there would not have been the Changi quilts," said Bruhn, who lives in Australia and has been giving talks on the story behind the quilts since 1995. Today, the Japanese and Australian quilts are exhibited at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. The British quilt is at the British Red Cross headquarters in London, England, and the original Girl Guide quilt that inspired the project now resides at the Imperial War Museum, also in London.

By early 1943, Changi jail was severely overcrowded, with an influx of new prisoners swelling numbers. Yet, crammed three to a tiny cell, with the impacts of by-now-severe hunger, disease, and general squalor making themselves felt, the women were making the best of it, organizing classes, activities and concerts, all recorded in *Pow Wow*, the camp newspaper.

Mulvany's memoirs do not mention any participation in the morale-boosting events organized in camp. Indeed, Bruhn remembers her as being aloof. Mulvany was "inclined to keep herself away from people.… She did not join in any activities. She said she had more important duties to attend to," Bruhn said. Indeed, by 1943, Mulvany would have been hard at work on her next project — a "silence hut," where the women would each have a turn at resting in cubicles containing mattresses made with stuffed canvas bags.

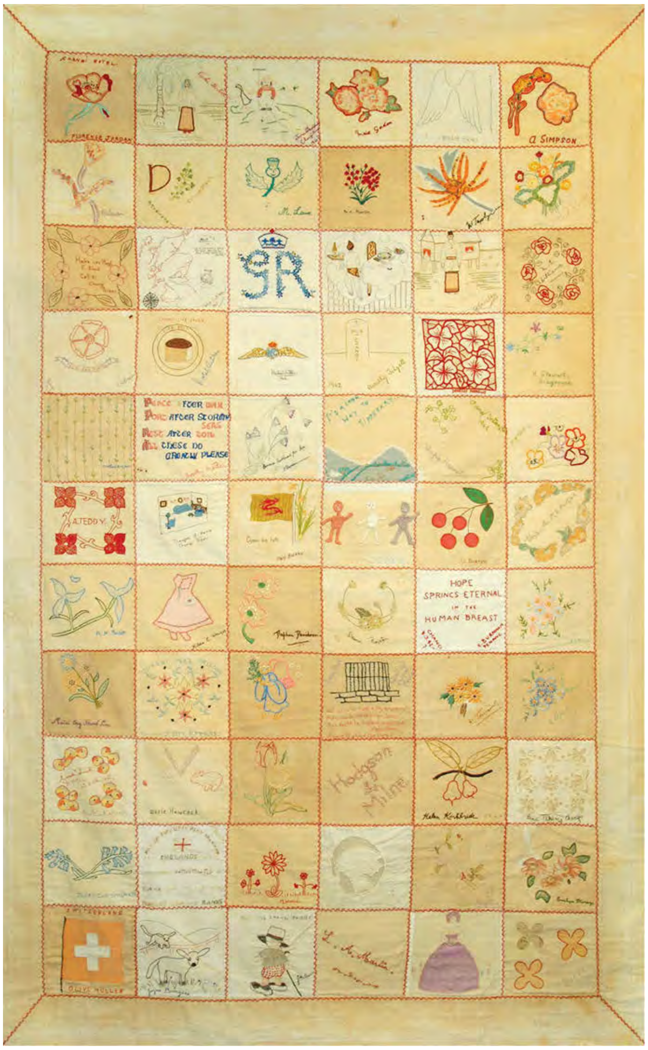
Here, Mulvany's Manitoulin Island survival skills came in handy. The 4.5-square-metre hut was built with bamboo poles and boughs, the roof covered with frond-like leaves from the coconut trees. The male prisoners assisted with the building of the hut, sticking the poles into holes dug just over a metre deep — below the frost line, just like at home in Canada.

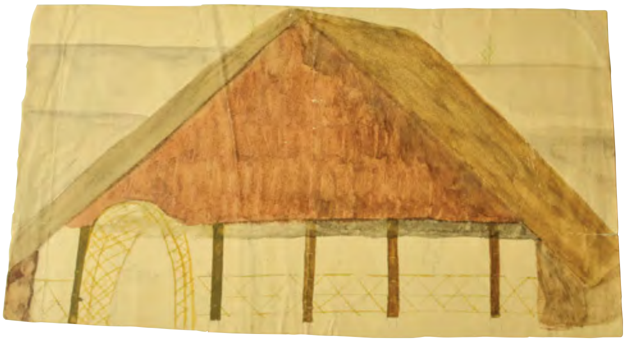
As Bruhn recorded in her diary entry for the opening ceremony

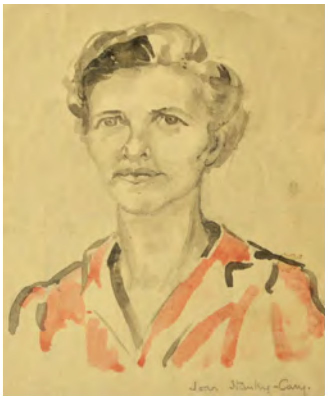


British Women and Children Interned in a Japanese Prison Camp, Syme Road, Singapore, 1945 by Leslie Cole. Cole visited the internment camp soon after its liberation. The women and children pictured are severely emaciated, an indication of the harsh conditions endured by the internees.

IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM







Far left: A quilt packed with secret messages created by women imprisoned by the Japanese in Singapore during the Second World War.

Top: A drawing of the silence hut. The hut was designed to give female inmates at Changi some privacy.

Near left: A portrait of Ethel Rogers Mulvany, made by Joan Stanley-Cary at Changi prison.

on February 13, 1943, the hut was a sanity-saver, a means of escaping the strains of camp life.

That year, life in Changi took a darker turn. In October 1943, the Kempeitai — the Japanese military police — descended upon the camp. The dreaded force arrested two women and fifty-five men under suspicion of running a spy ring — an episode known as the Double Tenth. In her diary, Bruhn writes of boots clanging on iron stairs, flashing torches, and inspections in the showers, all against a backdrop of "howling wind and dark clouds hiding the moon." One man was executed and fifteen died under interrogation and torture. At the prison, rations were cut, and activities such as games, concerts, plays, and school lessons were forbidden for months.

By February 1944, food rations were cut to half. Bruhn speaks of "filling up with water" — or edema — a symptom of the dreaded beriberi disease, which afflicted many of the women. In May 1944, the civilians were moved to another prison camp in the Changi district in order to make way for more incoming Allied POWs. In one shocking entry in July 1944, Bruhn writes of being so hungry in the new camp on Syme Road that she swallowed a baby mouse. Her description of finding the mice — "so tiny and pink and helpless" — helps to bring home the extent of the women's hunger. "Without thinking, I scooped up one and popped it in my mouth, and before I realized what I had done, I swallowed it," she wrote.

The urgency of the situation bred Mulvany's improbable cookbook project. By this time, her shopping trips outside the camp had been forbidden, and, as prisoners later found out, Red Cross parcels to the women were held back by the Japanese. In these desperate circumstances, Mulvany recalled a memory of her father telling her that, if ever she wanted something, "to just have it in mind and you've got it." It was this distant childhood memory evoking the power of imagination that gave rise to the Changi tea parties.

"We were hungry so I suggested that we make a jail cookbook," wrote Mulvany in her memoirs. "A cookbook! Can you imagine writing a cookbook in jail, when every mention of food seemed to make us hungrier?"

Mulvany's memoirs provide some vivid insights into the daily role-playing. She remembers an Australian, Euphemia Redfearn, setting the table with words as she called up imaginary cups, saucers, plates, knives, forks, salt, and the crowning item — a bouquet of flowers for the centre. "I would have wayside daisies," said Redfearn. "With sprigs of fern…. And bread! Bread with a brown crisp crust. I would cut it myself, right there at the table." As Mulvany describes it, after the tea parties the women would sleep "with a feeling of having had a meal."

Mulvany's irrepressible energy and determination made her one of the standout characters of the camp. But her bold attitude seems to have masked a fragile mental state. Fellow prisoner Freddy Bloom, an American journalist, wrote in her diary, "Ethel was larger than life, very beautiful with more energy than any human body could bear." But she also had a "past history of nervous disorder," Bloom pointed out. Later in the diary entries, Bloom loses patience, blasting the latter's "haywire" management of the Red Cross.

FAR LEFT: BRITISH RED CROSS. TOP AND NEAR LEFT: COURTESY OF MARION KING

Mulvany's apparently manic energy appears to have been a double-edged sword. While it enabled her to lead her fellow prisoners in constructive action, it may also have made her subsequent decline all the more dramatic. One nurse interviewed by Bernice Archer recalled that Mulvany was separated from the others towards the end, "because she was difficult to share with. She sang hymns all the time and was physically unwell with leg ulcers." Bruhn remembers that, towards the end of her gruelling captivity, Mulvany suffered "bouts of screaming fits," testimony backed up by Bloom's diary.

After liberation in September 1945, Mulvany was reunited with her husband, and both went to India to recuperate. Their marriage, however, did not survive.

Mulvany returned to Canada in 1946, lying low in Toronto at her aunt's home while she recovered. In her memoirs, she recounts how the trauma of starvation remained with her, leading her to pocket pieces of food whenever she left the dinner table, and to store them in her room. As her niece, Marion King, recalled in an interview: "She hid. She didn't want anyone to see her until she was well."

Mulvany published *The Prisoner of War Cookbook* in 1947. In 1953, she started the Treasure Van Corporation, which sold crafts made by people in developing countries, and raised funds for students at home and abroad. She died on Manitoulin Island in 1992.

In the aftermath of war, the experiences of the approximately eighty thousand women and children imprisoned by the Japanese in camps in the Far East was, as Bernice Archer points out, "erased from the public memory" — perhaps, as she suggests, this was because the capture and imprisonment of women and children was seen as "politically and socially embarrassing."

Through the quilt project — and, to a lesser extent the cookbook — Mulvany left behind a lasting legacy. She helped to ensure that the suffering and endurance of the women and children at Changi will not be forgotten.

// Learn more at CanadasHistory.ca/Mulvany

MULVANY WAS KNOWN TO PRE-WAR CANADIANS AS THE 'JUNGLE WOMAN'

The remarkable life of Ethel Rogers Mulvany started on Manitoulin Island, where she was born in 1904. Her mother died shortly after she was born, and she was adopted by the local Presbyterian minister and his wife, Henry and Isabella Rogers. She did well in school, becoming a teacher when still in her teens. She eventually moved to Toronto, where she worked part-time at a department store while studying social work at the University of Toronto. She later studied economics at McGill University and at the London School of Economics.

She went on to become the director of the Canadian Society for Literature and the Arts, which sent her on a tour of Asia in 1933 to do an educational survey. While on her travels, she met and married Denis Mulvany, a British army doctor who was stationed in Lucknow, India.

In India, she was well-connected with the elite of colonial society and initiated a project to take $50,000 worth of exotic wild animals and village crafts to the 1935 Canadian National Exhibition (CNE) in Toronto.

Mulvany used the exhibit in Toronto as an opportunity to raise funds for underprivileged women and children in India. Her work won her the King's silver jubilee medal in 1935. The *Toronto Daily Star* reported that she was one of the few women to receive the honour.

The *Star* also noted on June 26 of that year that Mulvany presented Prime Minister R.B. Bennett "with the skin of a man-eating tiger" the previous week.

Ethel and Denis Mulvany on their wedding day, in Lucknow, India, in 1933. The pair was stationed in Lucknow until 1940, when Denis Muvany was posted to Singapore. Their marriage ended after the war.

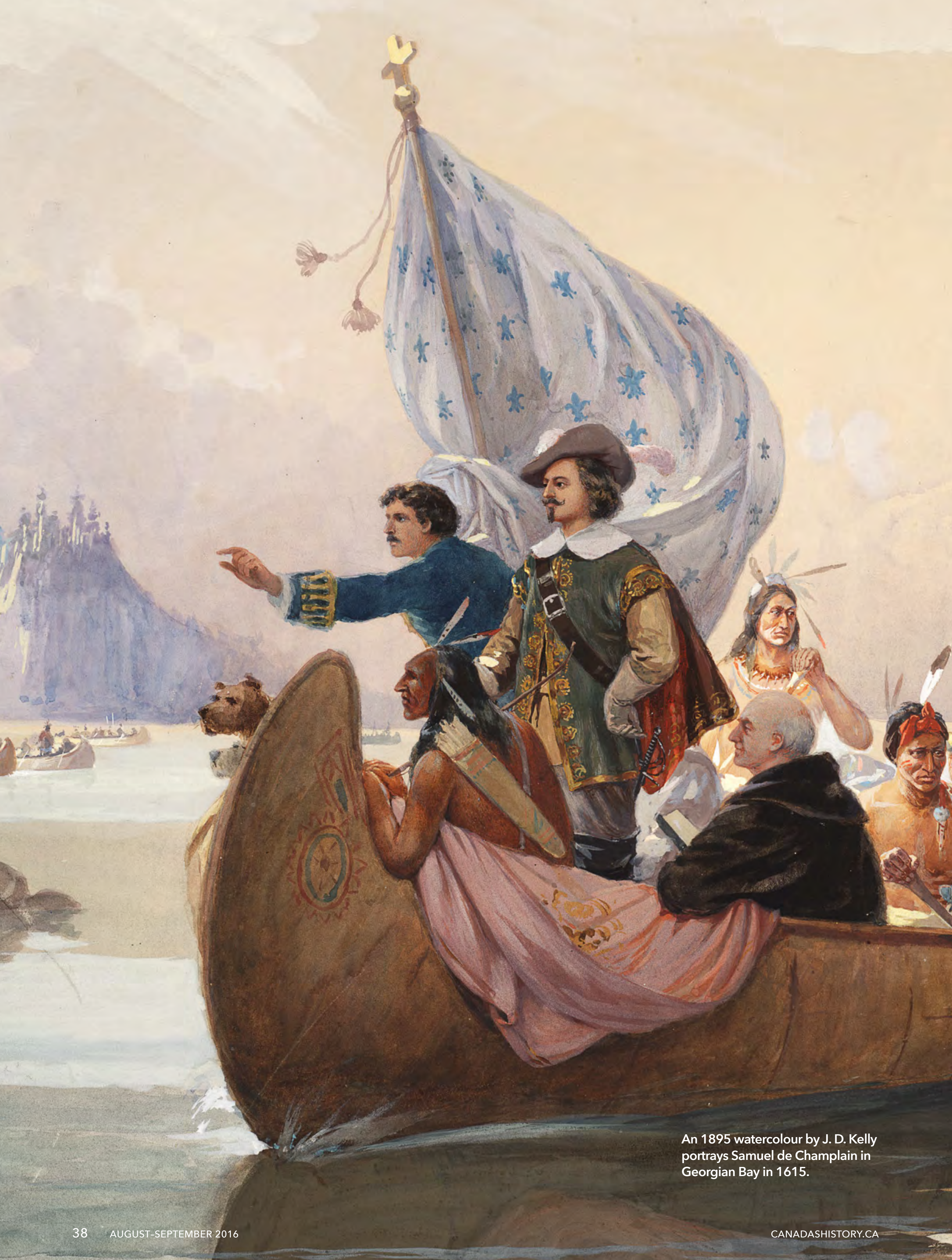
COURTESY OF MARION KING

The presentation was to publicize Mulvany's "Jungle Club" – an organization that Canadians could join to learn about India's wildlife. The *Star* published a series of articles describing the club's progress and referring to Mulvany as the "Jungle Woman."

The newspaper also carried many of the stories Mulvany told of her hair-raising adventures, such as her tale of witnessing a lunchtime fight staged between a mongoose and a python – a performance that lasted five hours. "According to Mrs. Mulvany, a great many people would rather witness a snake fight than dine with a general." Mulvany also described going on a crocodile hunt, noting that human remains were often found inside the reptiles. She claimed to have seen a woman being snatched by a crocodile as she drew water from a river: "She never came up."

Mulvany's promotional efforts paid off. Hundreds of children, and many adults, paid to be members of the Jungle Club. Also, General Motors presented Mulvany with a "light deluxe sedan" to be used for her work in India.

News of her wartime captivity also made headlines: "Fear Former Toronto Girl May be Prisoner of Japs," said the *Star* on April 20, 1942. The article mentioned Mulvany's CNE exhibit and noted that she had once survived the bite of a cobra. She was summed up as a "vivacious and talented woman, writer, social worker, and globe trotter."



An 1895 watercolour by J. D. Kelly portrays Samuel de Champlain in Georgian Bay in 1615.

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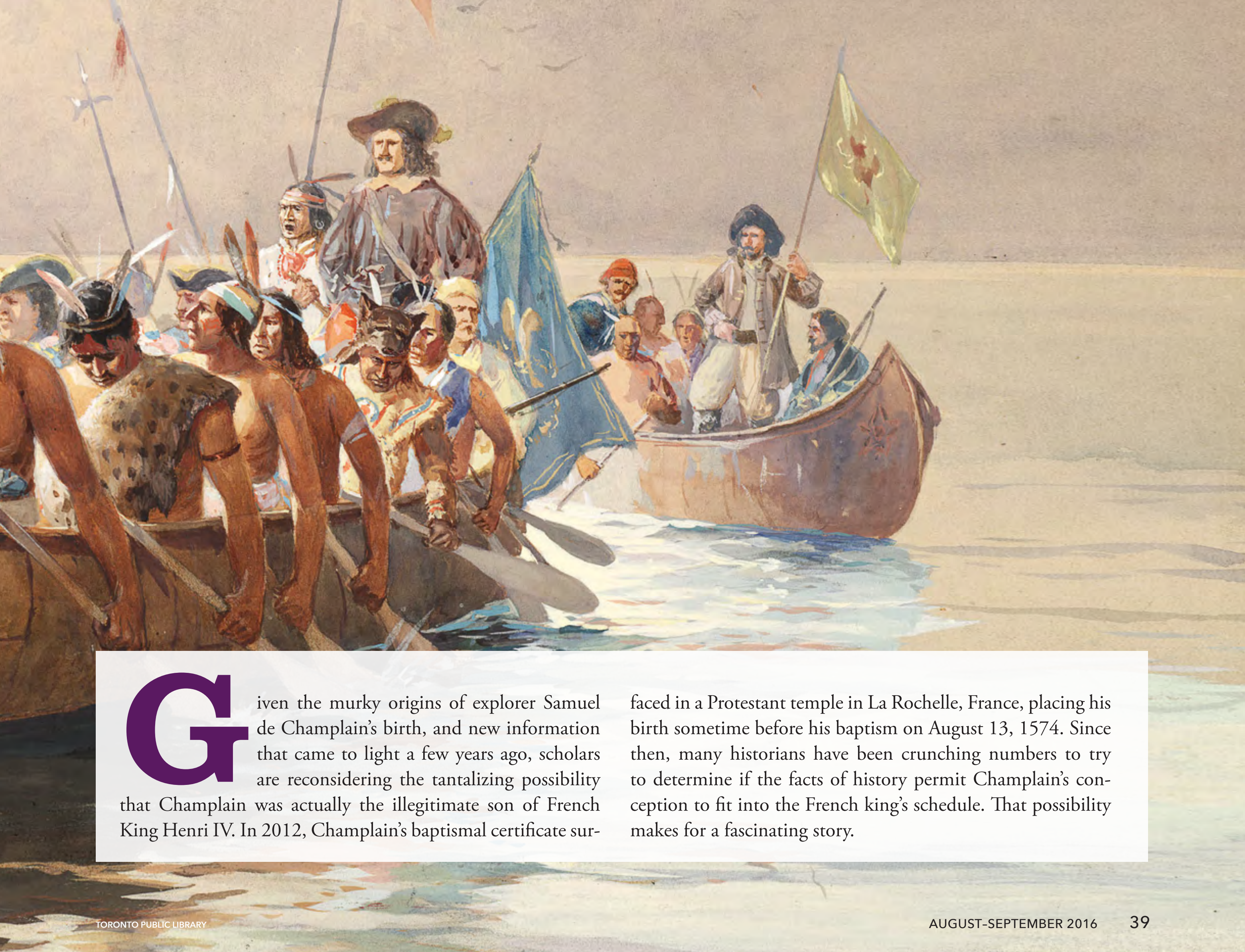
KINGLY CONNECTIONS

Samuel de Champlain has been called everything from the father of New France to Sam the sham. But can we call him sieur? *by K. Janet Ritch*



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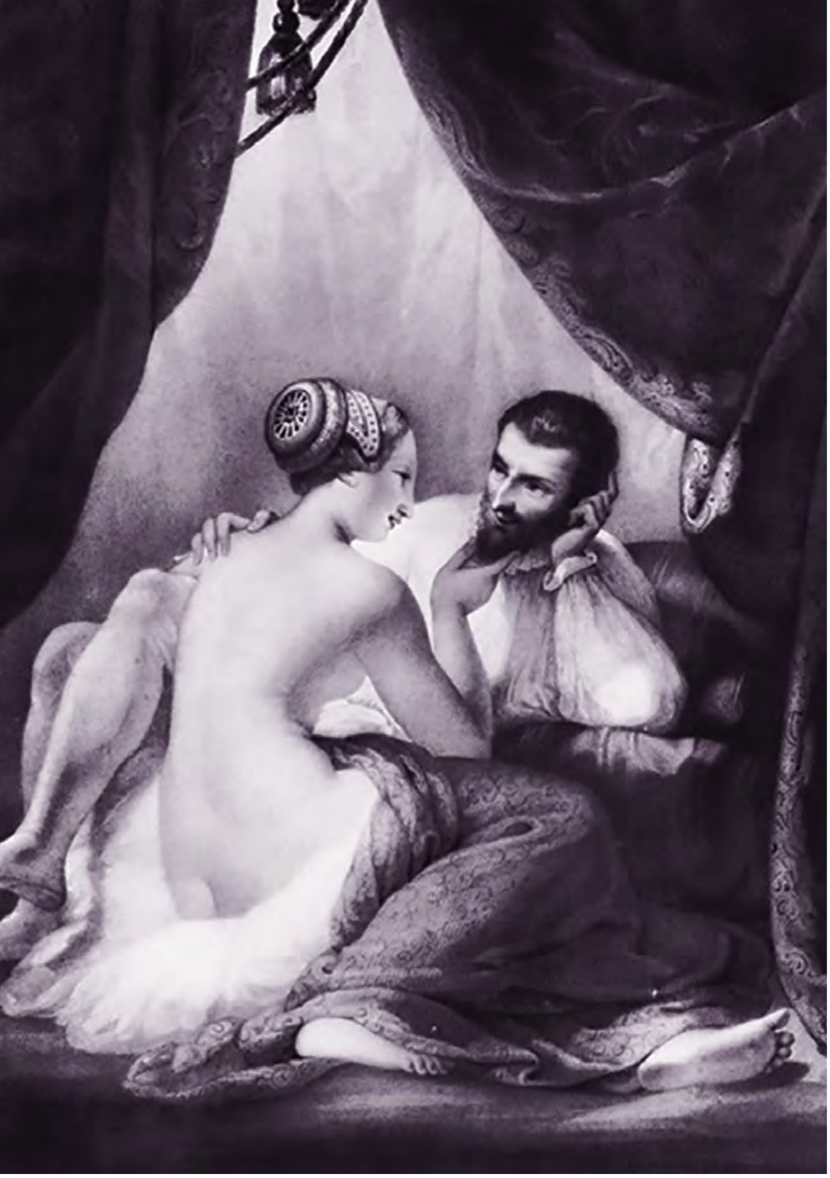
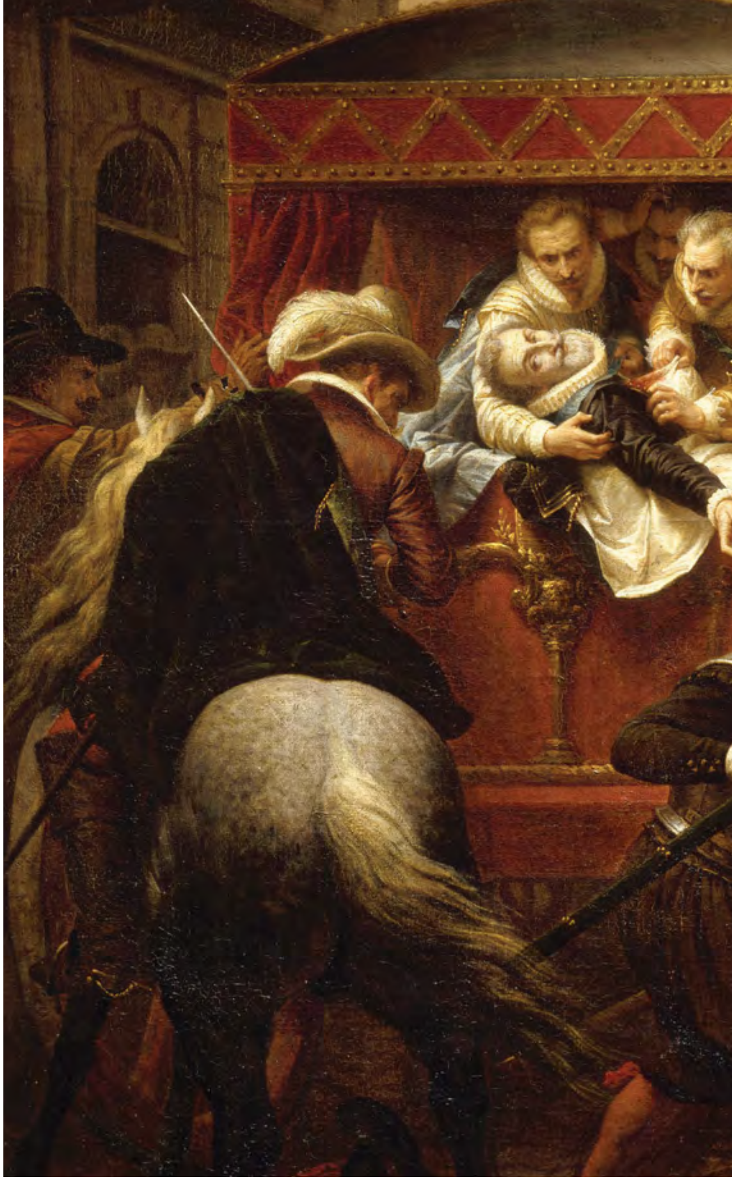
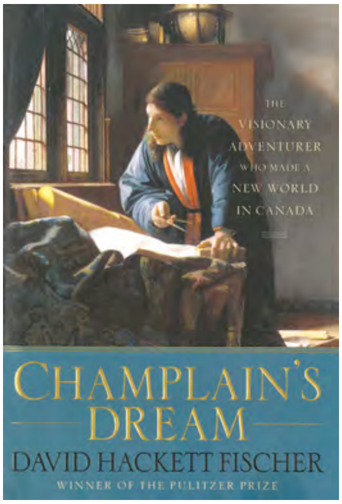
Given the murky origins of explorer Samuel de Champlain's birth, and new information that came to light a few years ago, scholars are reconsidering the tantalizing possibility that Champlain was actually the illegitimate son of French King Henri IV. In 2012, Champlain's baptismal certificate surfaced in a Protestant temple in La Rochelle, France, placing his birth sometime before his baptism on August 13, 1574. Since then, many historians have been crunching numbers to try to determine if the facts of history permit Champlain's conception to fit into the French king's schedule. That possibility makes for a fascinating story.





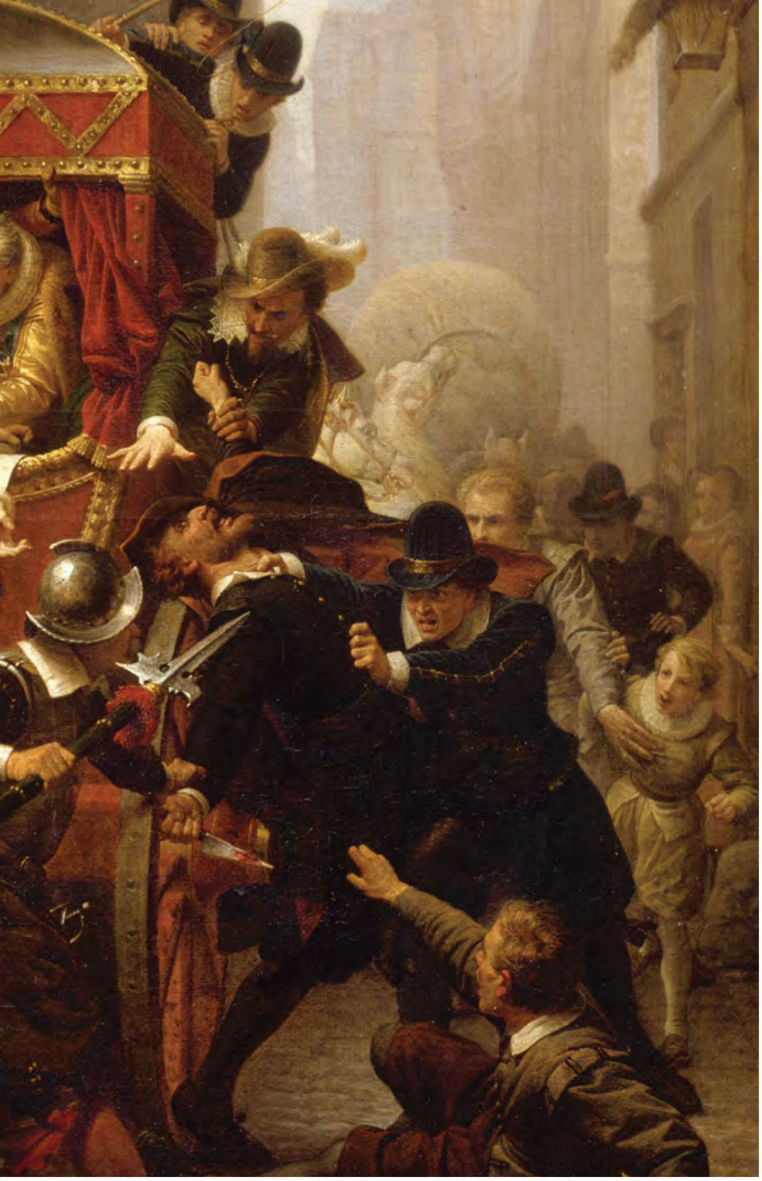
ABOVE LEFT: BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY; ABOVE RIGHT: MUSÉE NATIONAL DU CHATEAU DE PAU

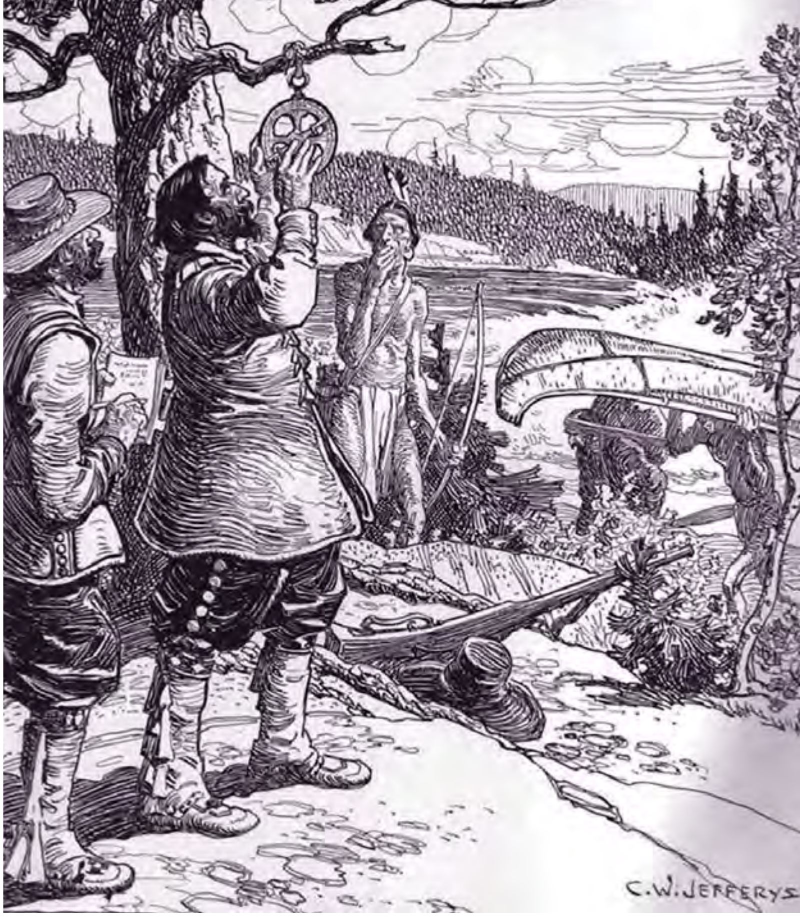
According to one French historian, Éric Thierry, late-sixteenth-century France was the golden age of royal children born out of wedlock. And American historian David Hackett Fischer defends the theory of Champlain being of royal blood in his popular book *Champlain's Dream* (2008). Champlain is an important figure in Canadian history. Against great odds, he colonized the New World with French settlers in the early 1600s. He settled Port Royal, the capital of Acadia in the Annapolis Basin, in 1605, and he founded the settlement of Quebec in 1608. He explored much of the Great Lakes region, established friendly relations with Aboriginal peoples, wrote detailed descriptions of his travels, and made accurate maps. He's been declared the father of New France, the founder of Quebec, and — in a 2008 *Globe and Mail* article dismissing him as a product of nineteenth-century mythmakers — Sam the sham. In the introduction to his own writings, he is sometimes referred to simply as Samuel Champlain, sometimes as Samuel de Champlain, and sometimes as Sieur de Champlain, the latter suggesting a noble birth.


THE VISIONARY ADVENTURER WHO MADE A NEW WORLD IN CANADA
CHAMPLAIN'S DREAM
DAVID HACKETT FISCHER
WINNER OF THE PULITZER PRIZE

Psychologically, Champlain's disposition was similar to his king's. Like Henri IV, Champlain was raised as a Protestant and died a Catholic. Like Henri IV, he was a natural leader, not afraid to get his own hands dirty and to mete out justice with equanimity. Both Henri IV and Champlain seem to have been closer to their mothers than their fathers, the latter being either distant or dead. Both men followed their intellectual curiosity before other more base concerns, and both discovered ways to end disputes through techniques of conflict resolution that were ahead of their time. Both men loathed war but did not hesitate to use force and violence when there was no alternative. And, like Henri and other French royalty, Champlain simply signed his name Champlain. The only really striking difference between them is this: Champlain led a life of relative chastity; Henri was openly promiscuous.

Henri IV was a strong king, a weak Catholic, and *un vert-galant* (a ladies' man) who happily exercised his *droit de seigneur* (his lordly





Left: A nineteeth-century lithograph of King Henri IV and his mistress Gabrielle d'Estrees.

Centre: *Assassination of Henri IV and the arrest of Ravaillac, 14 May, 1610,* by Charles-Gustave Housez.

Right: *Champlain Taking an Observation With the Astrolabe, 1613,* a pen and ink illustration by C.W. Jefferys, circa 1928.

right) upon women. Fischer reports that he had "fifty-six mistresses of record ..., casual liaisons beyond counting [and] at least eleven illegitimate children," eight of whom he legitimized and supported financially. Champlain could easily have slipped out of one of those casual liaisons "below the salt" — that is, from among the commoners.

Known in his youth as Henri de Navarre, the future king came from the ruling family of Béarn in a region that straddles the Pyrenees between France and Spain. His parents were Jeanne d'Albret, the daughter of the king of Navarre and a prominent Huguenot, and Antoine de Bourbon, a Catholic. Their religious differences and other conflicts led to frequent separations. After Antoine died of wounds sustained in battle in 1562, Jeanne became the sole ruler of the kingdom of Navarre. In 1568, a religious war prompted her and her son to flee north to the Protestant stronghold of La Rochelle in the province of Saintonge. In 1569, when Henri was sixteen, she made him and his cousin Henri de Condé co-leaders of the Protestant cause.

The following year, La Rochelle was designated one of four Protestant citadels (*villes de sûreté*) by the Paix de Saint-Germain. From 1570 to 1577, the Rochellais besieged the neighbouring town of Brouage, a thriving seaport, governing Brouage with their own appointees from La Rochelle. From 1568 to 1572, Henri was often in La Rochelle — the longest period lasted from October 1, 1570, up to nearly the end of July 1571. As a mature teenager coming of age, he would have mixed with many people in the region.

However, this time frame is too early for Champlain's conception — the La Rochelle baptismal certificate places Champlain's conception at around the beginning of November 1573. (By his own account, Champlain was born in Brouage, about forty kilometres from La Rochelle.) At the time Champlain was presumably conceived, Henri de Navarre was being held under house arrest in Paris. But Henri's actual activities, and whom he might have been seeing at the time, are little known. There are a number of scenarios that make it possible for Henri to be Champlain's father.

Champlain wrote little about his family or himself. Close male mentors did enter his life, but they were men like the pilot Guillaume Allène (his uncle) and François Gravé Du Pont (Pontgravé), who introduced him to Canada. Furthermore, Champlain seems to have had no siblings and spoke of himself only rarely. His mother is consistently named Marguerite Le Roy, but we know close to nothing about her.

By his own account, Champlain's connection to the king was important. Champlain wrote in his *Voyages* of 1636 that he couldn't

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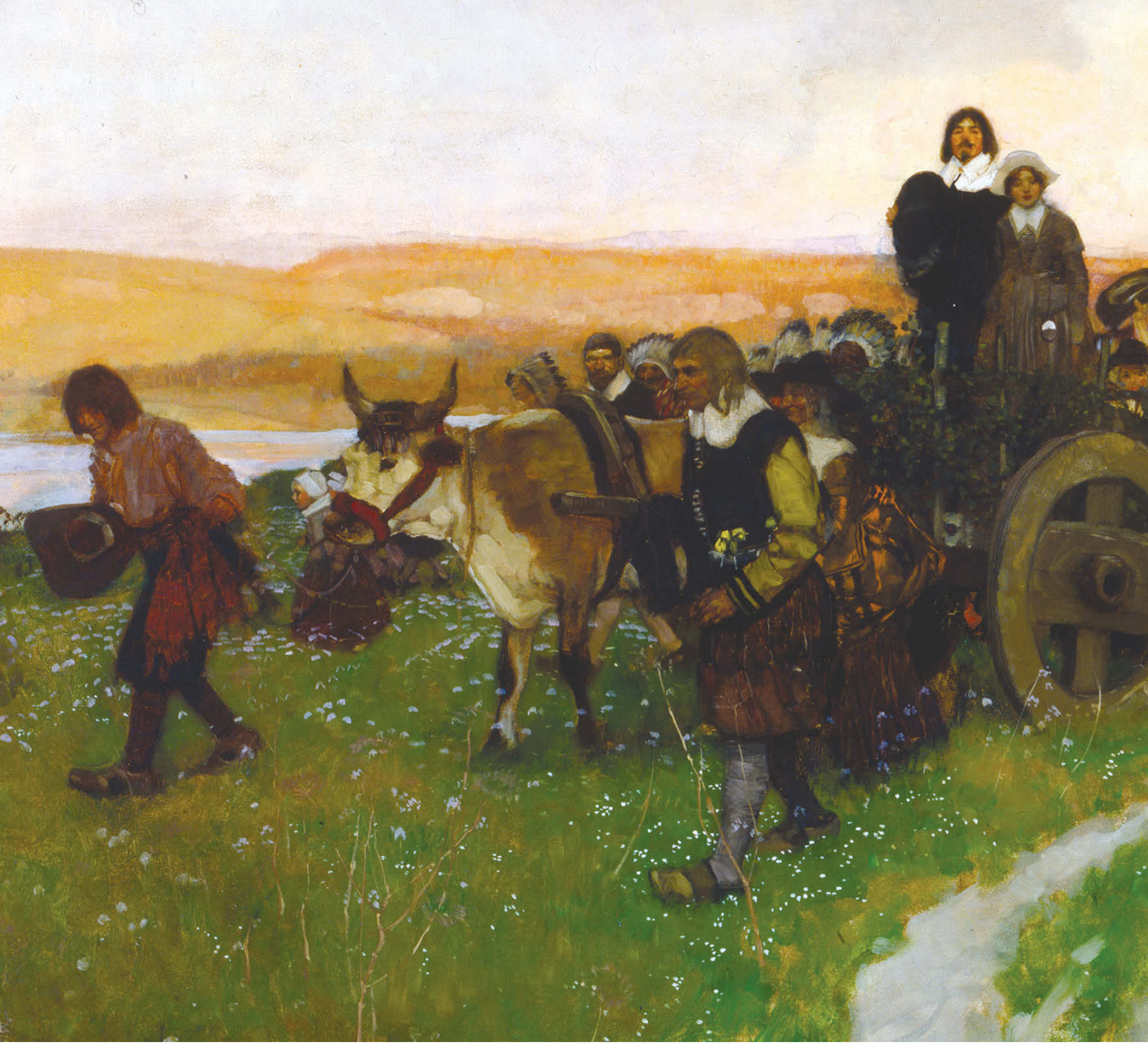

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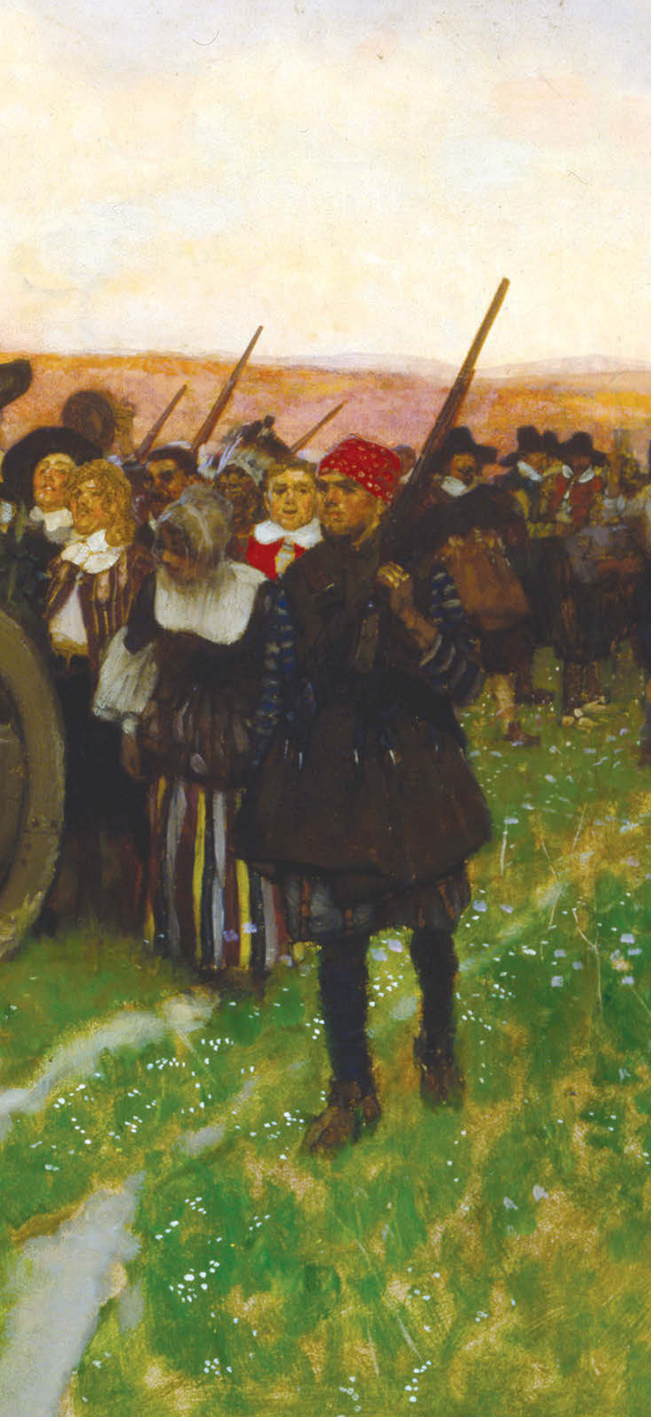
accept an invitation to go to Canada in 1603 without asking the king, "[his Majesty,] to whom I was under an obligation both by birth and by a stipend, with which he honoured me as a means to maintain me near him."

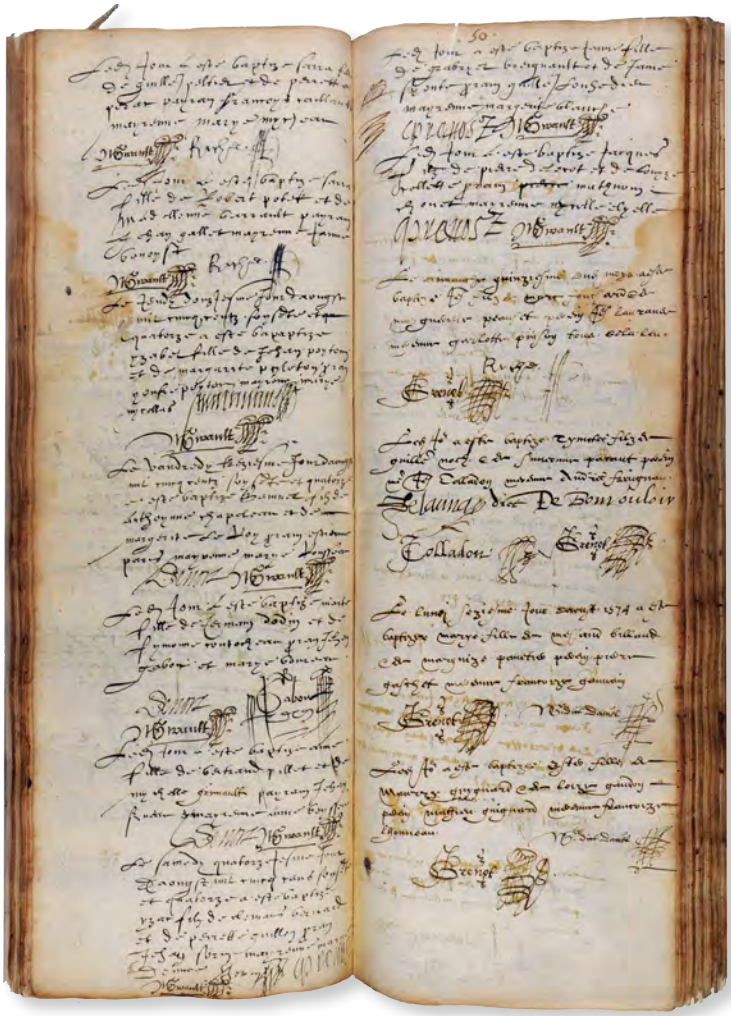
Scholars have suggested that the "birth" that obligated Champlain to serve the king was merely his French nationality, but that seems a rather weak excuse for an impediment to a voyage.

Champlain had already acted as a spy for the king when he was twenty-one to twenty-five years old, supporting King Henri IV against the French and Spanish ultra-Catholics during the Brittany campaign (1595–98). His activities as an informant likely continued during Champlain's voyage with France's recent enemy, the Spanish, to the West Indies (1599–1601) when he was twenty-five to twenty-seven. Without royal protection, a Frenchman with the Huguenot-sounding name Samuel, travelling with Spaniards, would have been highly at risk of accusation and reprisal for espionage. The stipend seems to have been a reward for Champlain's faithful service, yet Champlain explains it not as an encouragement for further loyal activities in the field but as a personal desire on the part of the king to enjoy the young man's presence at court.

Perhaps he was being retained as an advisor? He was young to be so engaged and surely more useful in the field. The most convincing explanation for the king's desire to keep Champlain near him might be a deeper familial bond between them, by *naissance*. It may have been a way for the king to acknowledge his parentage of Champlain, as he did with some of his other illegitimate offspring.

Other circumstantial evidence extends the preferred treatment Champlain continually received from the king. He reported personally to Henri IV after both his early trips to the West Indies and then to Canada in 1603, when he was still an obscure hick from





Left: *Arrival of Madame Champlain at Quebec, 1620,* by artist Frank Craig, 1909, depicts Champlain and his new wife, Hélène Boullé, arriving as Champlain takes up his duties as the lieutenant-general of the viceroy of New France.

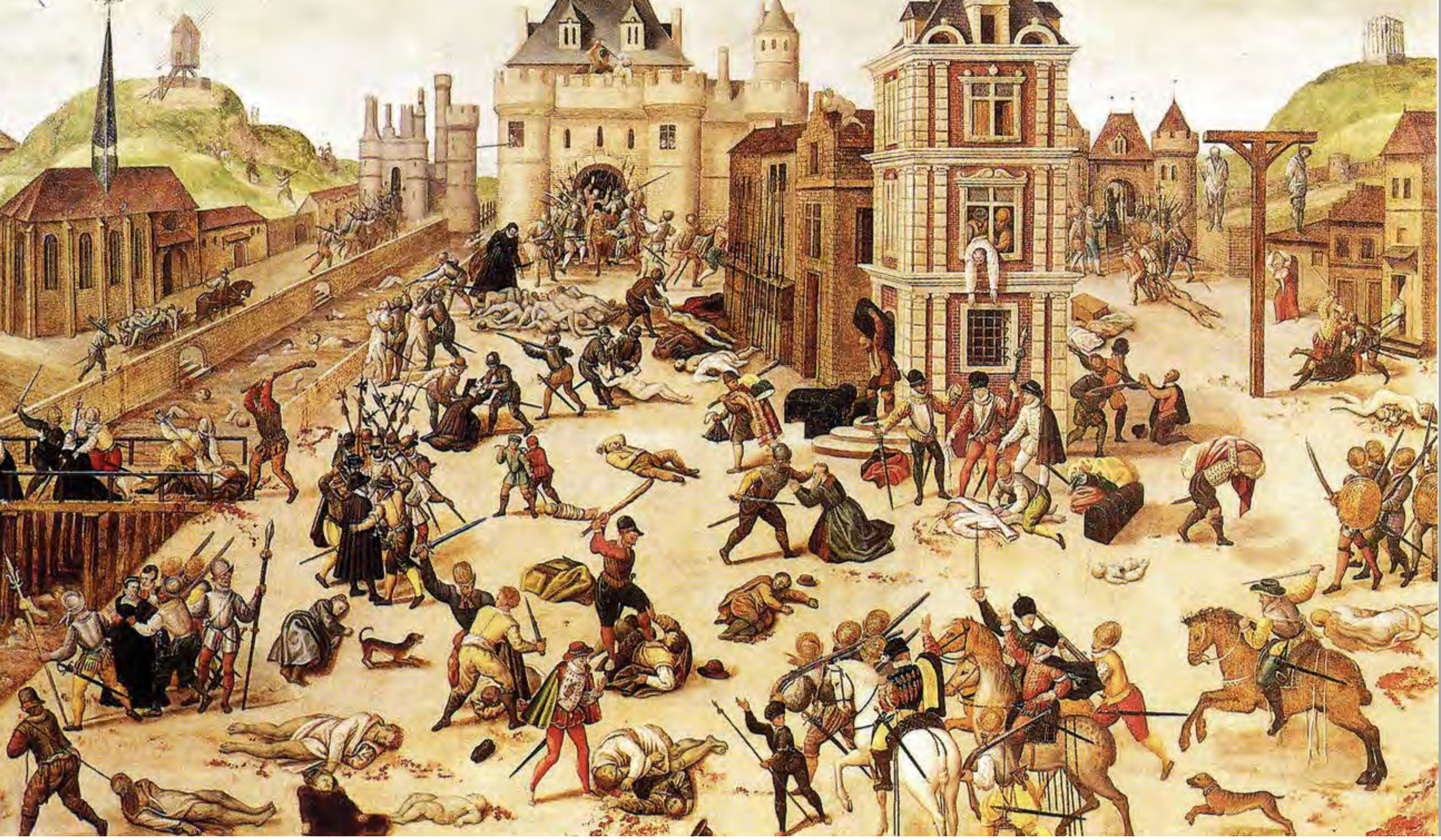
Above: The 1574 parish record believed to contain baptismal information about Samuel de Champlain. The reference is midway down the left page.

ARCHIVES OF CHARENTE-MARITIME, LA ROCHELLE, FRANCE

the boonies, ostensibly Brouage. Furthermore, his first journal of the 1603 voyage was licensed within a few months of his return. Just as today's publishers hesitate to risk their investment on an unknown author, so in early seventeenth-century Paris there were hoops to jump through before publication, which only someone with power equivalent to a royal patron could overrule. Someone of such substance pushed this privilege for Champlain. Finally, until his assassination in May 1610, King Henri IV continued to act as Champlain's greatest supporter. No future sovereign, whether Henri's second wife, Marie de Médicis, or their son, Louis XIII, or even Cardinal Richelieu, ever gave Champlain so much attention.

After the tragic and untimely loss of his true patron, Champlain arranged his own marriage in France, in December of the same year. He was thirty-six years old, while his bride, Hélène Boullé, was twelve. The dowry from Hélène's Huguenot father, 4,500 French livres followed by another 1,500 livres, supplied Champlain with more funds for the settlement and exploration in Canada. Arranged marriages were generally practised by the nobility, and members of the royal court attended his wedding. When the contract was signed in Paris on December 27, 1610, his father was deceased and his mother absent. The marriage produced no offspring, and Hélène became an Ursuline nun after her conversion from Huguenot to Catholic, spending only a limited time in Canada from 1620–24. The recent discovery by Jean-Marie Germes in France of the baptismal certificate of Samuel de Champlain has reawakened the improvable hypothesis of Champlain being Henri's son.

Not everyone agrees the certificate is Champlain's, however. Éric Thierry, a top Champlain scholar in France, has rejected the theory. He points out that the father's name is given as "Anthoine Chapeleau," in contrast with the "late Anthoine de Champlain" on Champlain's mar-



CANTONAL MUSEUM OF LAUSANNE

They were slaughtered in the streets during what became known as the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre.

riage certificate of 1610. And, while the mother's name is the same on both documents, Marguerite Le Roy was a common name at the time.

Yet the certificate contains three pieces of information that all ring true: the names of three individuals — Samuel the son, Antoine the father, and Marguerite Le Roy the mother; the confirmation that Champlain was born a Protestant; and the date, August 13, 1574. Only the surname Chapeleau is unexpected, and this one discrepancy accounts for the oversight of the document until now.

If we check out some of these points in greater detail, Champlain's date of birth in 1574 is consistent with the investigation that Conrad Heidenreich and I published in *Samuel de Champlain before 1604* (2010). Since then, I have argued that Samuel de Champlain must have been born between the eighth and the twelth of August 1574, at a time when both Protestants and Catholics practised infant baptism within eight days of birth. Given the high infant mortality rates at the time, families did not want to risk the salvation of their newborns by waiting any longer than necessary

Turning to the historical context, in August 1572, Jeanne d'Albret (Henri's Huguenot mother) and Catherine de' Medici arranged a marriage for the young Henri de Navarre to Marguerite (Catherine's daughter) that was designed to bring peace to the opposing Christian factions. Unfortunately, both Jeanne d'Albret and her son fell ill, causing the death of the former, which deprived Henri of his mother's support at the Parisian court. Plans for the wedding went ahead, however, and Henri's Huguenot friends came to Paris for the celebration, having been given assurances for their safety while in the capital. Instead they were slaughtered in the streets during what became known as the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, and Henri felt responsible for their deaths. During the massacre, both Henri de Navarre and Henri de Condé were held captive in the royal chamber, while their compatriots succumbed to their wounds in the public and private passages of Paris.

Even when he abjured his Huguenot persuasion and agreed to become a Catholic, Henri de Navarre, at the age of nineteen, was still under house arrest or surveillance. His position at court during this time remains obscure. At one point in 1573, from February 12 until early July, he was sent under guard to the Huguenot stronghold of La Rochelle, which was under siege, to help to pacify the Rochelais.

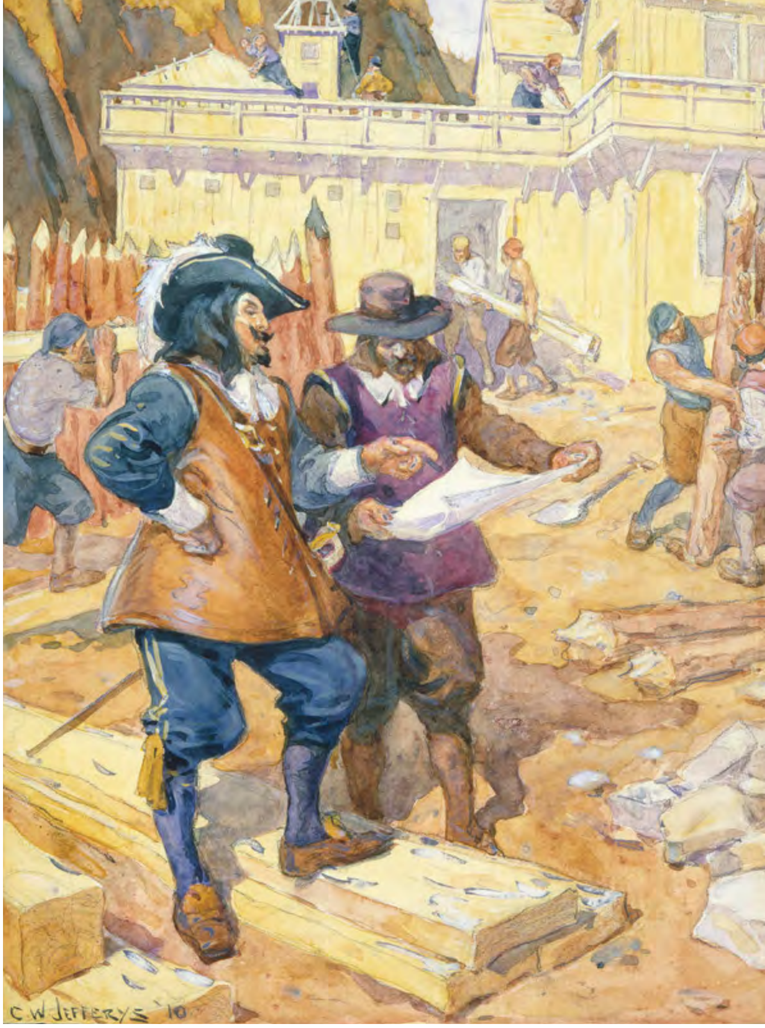
Several scenarios for Champlain's birth suggest themselves. Either Henri, at the age of twenty-one, slipped away from surveillance in Paris to return to the La Rochelle region in early November 1573, or a country girl from the region followed him to Paris.

It's also possible that there was a delay between the time Champlain was born and the time he was baptized. A baptismal record containing the names of two parents — even if they were adoptive parents — would confer legitimacy on an out-of-wedlock child. If Champlain was born in April 1574, nine months after the siege of La Rochelle — and if Henri was indeed Champlain's unacknowledged father — it may have taken his unknown mother some time to inform Henri of his birth. Arranging for adoption into a "respectable bourgeois family" was a common practice for illegitimate children of high-born parents, according to Fischer. Four months or so does not seem an unreasonable period for arriving at an accommodation, given Henri's relative inaccessibility at court and the difficulties of communication at the time.

It is even plausible that Champlain was born in La Rochelle to a Huguenot woman who placed him with a Protestant family from Brouage. Or, if he was born in Brouage, his family may have taken him to La Rochelle to be baptized because there was a Protestant temple there. Whether or not he actually knew where he was born, Champlain always maintained the facade of his paternity in Brouage; his earliest memories were likely formed there.

The most significant feature supporting the probability of Henri IV's paternity is the resemblance between the characters of Henri de Navarre and Samuel de Champlain. As king, Henri's greatest achievement was to end the Wars of Religion and to give legal equality to both Protestants and Catholics. Henri's personal piety was grounded in a respect for truth, approached through discussions in council and consensus. He embraced his own conscience while abhorring force and rigid ideology, which experience had taught him to be futile. This same tolerance is reflected in Champlain's attitude to Canada's indigenous people, so effectively described in Fischer's *Champlain's Dream*. For Champlain, too, justice and consensus prevailed over revenge and retaliation in his dealings with First Natioins.

King Henri IV has become a legend of tolerance for France; why not, then, accept Champlain as a legend of tolerance for Canada? Legend is the stuff of dreams and visions, in this case of an open-minded quest for counsel, consensus, and peaceful coexistence. A possible father-son connection between the king and the explorer awakens the imagination, providing a legend for our times.



Opposite page: A painting of the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre of 1572 by Francois Dubois, a Huguenot artist born in 1529.

Above: Samuel de Champlain supervising the construction of the Habitation at Quebec in 1608, by C.W. Jefferys, circa 1925.

ABOVE RIGHT: LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA. BELOW: COURTESY OF ERIC MILLS

LATE SCHOLAR WAS FASCINATED BY CHAMPLAIN AS A MAN OF TOLERANCE

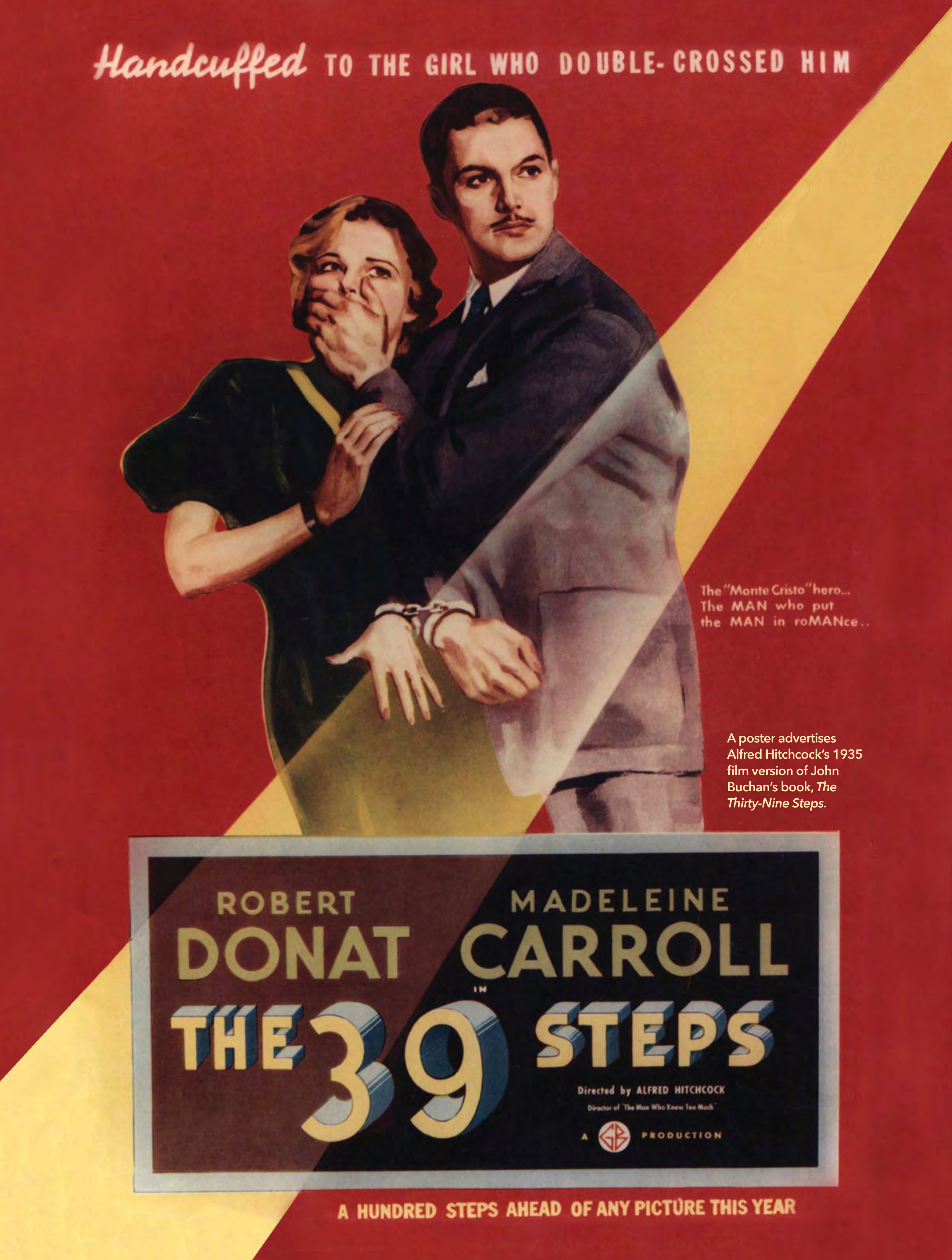
A few months after completing the accompanying story for *Canada's History*, author Janet Ritch passed away. Her death from cancer on December 12, 2014, at age fifty-nine, was a great loss to many people.

Janet was a colleague of mine, a highly respected researcher, translator, and scholar whose assistance was invaluable to my published efforts on Samuel de Champlain and John Cabot. I served as an assessor for a successful funding application for the research she was pursuing at her death, on indigenous slaves in colonial New France. Her curiosity and passion extended well beyond Champlain, but the issue of his possible status as an illegitimate son of Henri IV did fire her final years.

There is not much for me to add to the evidence Janet presented in her article. If I were able to sit with her again today and debate her case, I would be more interested in engaging Janet on her desire to view Champlain as a "legend of tolerance" for our time. Legend is something that has plagued approaches to Champlain, ever since he was resurrected as a historical figure in the nineteenth century.

Morris Bishop, in the 1963 introduction to a new edition of his classic biography *Champlain: The Life of Fortitude* (1948), argued for Champlain to be embraced as a "national hero." It's a burden few figures in our history have to shoulder, and when we approach history with a determination to create such heroes and gild them in legend, however useful such legends may appear to us, our ability to assess them critically becomes burdened as well.

Champlain is a fascinating, complicated figure who deserves all the attention he attracts, and Janet's explorations add to that fascinating complication. But in response to the question of whether Champlain was the son of Henri IV, I would say: Would it matter if he wasn't? **– Douglas Hunter**


Handcuffed TO THE GIRL WHO DOUBLE-CROSSED HIM
The "Monte Cristo" hero...
The MAN who put
the MAN in roMANce..
ROBERT
DONAT
MADELEINE
CARROLL
IN
THE 39 STEPS
Directed by ALFRED HITCHCOCK
Director of "The Man Who Knew Too Much"
A GB PRODUCTION
A HUNDRED STEPS AHEAD OF ANY PICTURE THIS YEAR

A poster advertises Alfred Hitchcock's 1935 film version of John Buchan's book, *The Thirty-Nine Steps.*

39 Steps to Fame

WHY A POTBOILER PENNED BY A GOVERNOR GENERAL OF CANADA MORE THAN A CENTURY AGO CONTINUES TO THRILL PEOPLE TODAY.

by Kate Jaimet

When John Buchan wrote *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, he hardly expected his "elementary" spy thriller to become an enduring work of literature. Laid up with a digestive disorder in the fall of 1914, the Scottish author, lawyer, and statesman, who would later become the fifteenth Governor General of Canada, penned the novel as a sort of lark.

"My Dear Tommy," Buchan wrote in the book's dedication to his friend Thomas Nelson. "You and I have long cherished an affection for that elementary type of tale … which we know as the 'shocker' — the romance where the incidents defy the probabilities, and march just inside the borders of the possible. During an illness last winter I exhausted my store of those aids to cheerfulness, and was driven to write one for myself. This little volume is the result."

Published in book form in October 1915 and priced at a shilling a copy, Buchan's "little volume" became an instant success. It sold twenty-five thousand copies before the year was out, and another thirty-four thousand copies in 1916. Now, more than a century later, *The Thirty-Nine Steps* has never been out of print.

It has spawned three movie adaptations, several radio plays, and an award-winning stage show that continues to run in London and New York. (The titles of the adapted stage and movie versions are usually abbreviated as *The 39 Steps*.)

"You would have never, never dreamt that it would have become the bestseller it became," said Carleton University literature professor emeritus Michael Gnarowski. "I think the reason for it is because *The Thirty-Nine Steps* is extremely adaptable: to movies, to TV, to the stage, as a radio play. It's very physical: people jumping on stages and so forth. Everybody played with the story, and people, in some ways shamelessly, took the story and adapted it to suit their own needs."

Spy fiction arose as a literary genre in Britain in the years between the turn of the twentieth century and the beginning of the First World War. Early spy novels typically featured shadowy underground networks, often German, whose plots to overthrow the British empire were foiled by a lone patriotic hero. In his introduction to the book *Spy Fiction, Spy Films, and Real Intelligence*, intelligence expert and history professor Wesley Wark traces the emergence of British spy novels from the "genetic soup" of nineteenth-century detective novels, anarchist novels, terrorist novels, and American dime novels, in the years just before the First World War — "years in which feverish concerns for national security, imperial strength and impending conflict provided rich material for the new literary formula-to-be."

Adds Gnarowski: "England was full of rumours. The magazines were publishing stories about spies. Schoolboys were watching for submarines. There was a lot of that in the air, and so this could be fed into it."

ALAMY

A scene from the movie *The 39 Steps*. Actor Robert Donat, right, played the role of Richard Hannay.

ALAMY

When he began writing *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, the thirty-nine-year-old Buchan was already an accomplished author. The son of a Scottish church minister, he had put himself through Oxford University with scholarships and the income earned from his writing. By 1914, he had published six novels and dozens of short stories, as well as several works of non-fiction. Connected to British high society through his Oxford friendships and his marriage, he was also a diplomat, lawyer, and politician. In 1901 he went to South Africa to spend two years as a secretary to the British High Commissioner. Upon his return he practised law for a while but was more drawn to literature and journalism. He also ran as a Unionist candidate for Parliament in 1911.

Politics loomed large as Buchan set pen to paper to write *The Thirty-Nine Steps*. The First World War had begun in July 1914, and Britain had entered the war in August. He sought to enlist as a soldier, but his age, his family situation (he had two children by 1914), and especially his ill health (he suffered from a duodenal ulcer) held him back. Instead of fighting, he spent the early months of the war writing from his bed at a seaside convalescent home in Kent.

"When Buchan writes *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, he reaches into his knowledge [of international affairs], because by then he's already well placed in the British establishment," said Gnarowski. "Buchan knows that there is all sorts of skullduggery going on in the background, and he draws upon it."

The Thirty-Nine Steps begins with the hero, Richard Hannay, feeling "pretty well disgusted with life." A British South African mining engineer who has "made his pile" in the colonies, this rugged man of action is bored and disillusioned with life in London, longing for adventure and open spaces. Suddenly, adventure surfaces in the form of Franklin P. Scudder, a furtive fellow who claims to be a secret agent and says he has discovered a plot against Britain by a subterranean network of "very dangerous people." Hannay agrees to conceal Scudder in his flat for a few weeks, until the moment is right to intervene and foil the plot. Before the moment arrives, Scudder is murdered, leaving Hannay with a dead body in his apartment and the responsibility to save the British Empire on his hands.

Key to the story, Scudder has also left behind a notebook, written in a secret code, that lays out the details of the plot against Britain. Hannay pockets the notebook, sneaks out of his flat disguised as a milkman, and catches the next train to the Scottish Highlands.

Wanted for murder by the police and pursued by Scudder's mysterious enemies, Hannay must elude capture for long enough to decode Scudder's notebook, figure out the plot against Britain, and bring it to the attention of the proper authorities, thus proving his innocence and saving the Empire in one fell swoop. In the ensuing chase, Hannay climbs crags, jumps trains, dons disguises, dodges planes, and blows up a makeshift prison cell.

Along the way he discovers that the enemy spies intend to steal Britain's naval defence plans and spirit them onto a ship bound for

Germany. Their rendezvous is a house on a cliff with thirty-nine steps down to the sea — a setting inspired by the location where Buchan was writing. Hannay foils the villains and saves England from invasion, just as the First World War begins. The hero also promptly joins the army. Not surprisingly, the book was popular among British soldiers serving in the trenches.

Though Buchan did not invent the spy novel, he combined the elements of breakneck chases, clever disguises, technological gadgetry, mysterious clues, subtle and nefarious villains, and an everyman hero thrust into a high-stakes, undercover game of survival, bringing it all together with a tightly woven, action-packed plot-line. The result would serve as a prototype for spy novels and movies through the century to come.

Novelist Graham Greene adapted Buchan's formula in his own much darker and more pessimistic novels. "Richard Hannay's … long flight and pursuit — across the Yorkshire and the Scottish moors, down Mayfair streets, along the passages of Government buildings, in and out of Cabinet rooms and country houses, toward the cold Essex jetty with the thirty-nine steps … were to be a pattern for adventure-writers ever since," wrote Greene.

After his recovery in the spring of 1915, Buchan went to France during the Second Battle of Ypres to serve briefly as a front-line correspondent for the *Times* before being recruited to work in the British Intelligence Corps. His duties included escorting dignitaries on tours of the front lines and preparing battle reports for senior officials. He was not an active combatant, but the conditions at the front — poor-quality food, constant tension, a lack of regular routine — apparently played havoc with his health. In 1916 he suffered a relapse of his intestinal condition and was ordered back to England to recover. By 1917, he had become the director of intelligence in the British Ministry of Information. Meanwhile, he penned an ongoing history of the war that was published in fifty-thousand-word instalments.

John Buchan and Alfred Hitchcock confer during the shooting of the 1935 movie *The 39 Steps*.

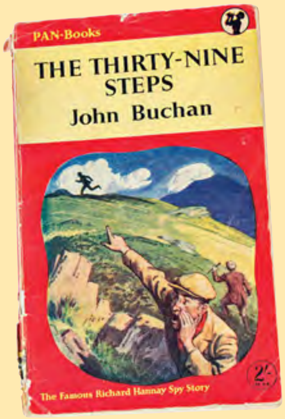
Somehow, during this time, Buchan found the opportunity and inspiration to write two sequels to *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, which recounted Hannay's experiences as a soldier and sometimes secret agent for England in the First World War. In *Greenmantle*, Hannay is joined by a team of three other secret agents to foil a German plot that involves using a false Islamic prophet to rally the Muslim world in support of the kaiser. In *Mr. Standfast*, a darker and more introspective novel, Hannay and his friends are joined by a British nurse, Mary Lamington, who also serves as an intelligence agent, in the last stand against the German spy ring, as the First World War draws to its bloody end. Hannay and Lamington fall in love, and the story leaves them retiring to the Cotswolds to mourn their dead comrades and build a new life together.

A PROLIFIC WRITER

Even when he became Canada's Governor General, Lord Tweedsmuir, John Buchan, did not stop writing. During his time at Rideau Hall from 1935 to 1940, he worked on a biography of the Roman Emperor Augustus, his autobiography, *Memory Hold-the-Door,* and his last novel, *Sick Heart River*, which was set in the Northwest Territories.

Over his lifetime, Buchan wrote a total of twenty-nine novels, forty-two non-fiction works, ten biographies, four books of poetry, and two short story collections. He was also the editor of fourteen books.

Nor was he the only writer in the family. His wife, Susan Buchan – Lady Tweedsmuir – wrote several novels, children's books, plays, and biographies. As Lady Tweedsmuir, she promoted literacy in Canada, organizing a program to send books to remote areas of the West. It was due to her urging that the Governor General's Literary Awards were established in 1936.



The viceregal couple travelled widely throughout Canada, including the High Arctic, and encouraged Canadians to develop their own distinct identity. In a speech in Montreal in 1937, Lord Tweedsmuir famously stated, "a Canadian's first loyalty is not to the British Commonwealth of Nations but to Canada and Canada's King." He also seemed to be genuinely attached to his new home. In a letter to friends that year, he stated, "I am a passionate Canadian in my love for the country and the people."

Lord Tweedsmuir's life ended on Canadian soil. In February 1940 he suffered a stroke, and he died shortly afterwards. Today he is remembered as one of Canada's most outstanding Governors General. – *Kate Jaimet*

CRITERION
JOHN BUCHAN'S 'THE 39 STEPS'
LONDON'S NO.1 COMEDY
Adapted by Patrick Barlow

Above: A scene from the popular theatrical production *The 39 Steps*, adapted as a comedy for contemporary audiences.

Left: A billboard at London's Criterion Theatre.

As peace settled over Europe, the exploits of Richard Hannay might have faded into literary history. But, by the 1930s, European peace was being threatened by totalitarian regimes in Italy and Germany, and early spy stories including *The Thirty-Nine Steps* found a renewed audience. This time, film was the medium, and the director was Alfred Hitchcock.

Hitchcock admired Buchan's writing and acknowledged the novelist's influence in the making of his 1934 thriller *The Man Who Knew Too Much*. Buchan consulted with Hitchcock on his adaptation of *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, which hit the cinemas in April 1935, just a few months before Buchan would arrive in Canada to take up his role as Governor General Lord Tweedsmuir. (King George V had insisted on granting Buchan a baronetcy, since it went against tradition for the Governor General to be a commoner.)

In his adaptation, Hitchcock captured the novel's feeling of pursuit and suspense with quick cuts between scenes of peril and escape. Though he stayed true to the overall storyline, Hitchcock set the movie in the 1930s and introduced two important differences in his script.

First, instead of a coded notebook, the secret to the plot against Britain resides in the brain of a music-hall performing artist called Mr. Memory, who is dramatically shot by the villain in the movie's climax but reveals the secret to Hannay on his deathbed.

Second, Hitchcock introduces women into the story. The world of adventure was seen as exclusively a man's world when Buchan penned his novel, but the First World War had proven that women — as Red Cross nurses, ambulance drivers, and sometimes even spies — could also take action in the face of danger. This was reflected in Hitchcock's adaptation, as it was in Buchan's third book in the Richard Hannay series, *Mr. Standfast*.

The two principal female figures in the movie *The 39 Steps* are the mercenary spy Annabella, who takes the place of Scudder, and the love interest, Pamela. The love plot adds another complexity to Hannay's dilemma: Not only must he prove his innocence and save the Empire, he must also win the girl.

"The fact that there's a love story going on at the same time is a stroke of genius, I think — and the fact that they don't really like each other at the beginning, but they're forced together," said Patrick Barlow, an actor and playwright who in 2005 adapted the Hitchcock film into a West End London stage comedy in which all of the roles are played by four actors. "She wants to be free, but of course she's madly in love with him. And he's madly in love with her, but he's acting as though he can't be bothered with all that. It's a very English thing, the English refusing to admit their feelings. Being English myself, and suffering from that myself, I find that very funny. There's endless comic material there."

TOP: FIERY ANGEL. LOWER LEFT: ALAMY

What makes the novel, originally written as a thriller, fodder for comedic treatment in the twenty-first century? Partly, it's the fact that the narrative innovations of 1915 — shadowy villains! mysterious clues! — have become spy-thriller clichés; and the technological wonders — biplanes! motorcars! — come across as hilariously dated.

But, more profoundly, it's the narrative structure of the story — the quick succession of narrow escapes made possible by a sequence of disguises and assumed identities — that drives the comedy. The physical adventure of Hitchcock's movie becomes the physical comedy of Barlow's play, as an endless succession of trains, planes, and rugged moorlands are crammed into the confined space of a theatre stage and four overworked actors take on more than 150 parts, frenetically changing hats, coats, and accents as they re-enact the chase.

"I thought, if I'm going to do this for four people, it's got to be insanely suspenseful," Barlow said. "Because for me, the more impossible it is to put on the stage, the funnier it is."

Barlow's *The 39 Steps* opened at London's Tricycle Theatre in 2006 to rave reviews, premiered on Broadway in 2007, won the 2007 Laurence Olivier Award for Best New Comedy, and has played in over forty countries worldwide, including Canada. It continues to play in New York, in London, and in theatres large and small across North America and the United Kingdom.

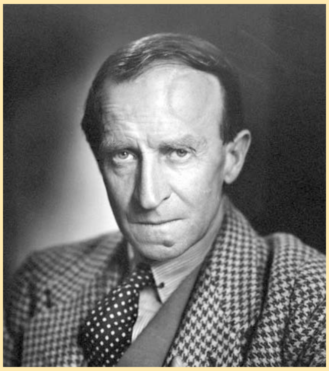
Would Lord Tweedsmuir have liked what became of his story and its transition from thriller to farce? That's hard to say, but his descendants seem to approve.

"The Buchan family has been very, very loyal to this and very positive about it. They were thrilled, absolutely thrilled, at the fact that it's been such a success," said Barlow. "They come to first nights. And there are hundreds of Buchans. There's little baby Buchans and elderly Buchans, and they're all absolutely lovely — and absolutely positive about this, even though it's not quite based on the book, based more on the film. But they didn't have any problem with that."

Adapted and readapted over the past century — whether as a film, a play, a thriller, or a comedy — the story still has the power to enthrall.

// Learn more at CanadasHistory.ca/39Steps

TROUBLING LANGUAGE



Sir John Buchan, 1st Baron Tweedsmuir, the Governor General of Canada, in 1937.

YOUSUF KARSH/LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA

Despite their merits, *The Thirty-Nine Steps* and its sequels are like many books of their time in that today they cannot escape scrutiny on questions of anti-Semitism and racism.

In the opening chapters of *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, the dodgy secret agent Franklin P. Scudder speaks of a nefarious plot against England that's masterminded by anarchist Jews: "A little white-faced Jew in a bath-chair with an eye like a rattlesnake … is the man who is ruling the world just now." However, Scudder's Jewish conspiracy turns out to be a red herring; the evil masterminds are in fact Germans.

Rather than any anti-Semitism on the part of Buchan himself, Scudder's attitude appears to be an attempt by the author to portray the anti-Semitism that was rampant in Europe at the time. In fact, as a member of the British Parliament, Buchan chaired the parliamentary Palestine committee, dedicated to helping Jews settle in Palestine, and, during his tenure as Canadian Governor General in the 1930s, he was an outspoken supporter of the Jewish community in Canada.

A thornier issue emerges in the racist attitude displayed by Buchan's hero Richard Hannay. Throughout the novels, Hannay displays a callously off-handed racism toward the black Africans in the Empire's conquered territories. For instance, in describing a musical show in a seedy nightclub in *The Three Hostages*, Hannay says, "A n----- band, looking like monkeys in uniform, pounded out some kind of barbarous jingle."

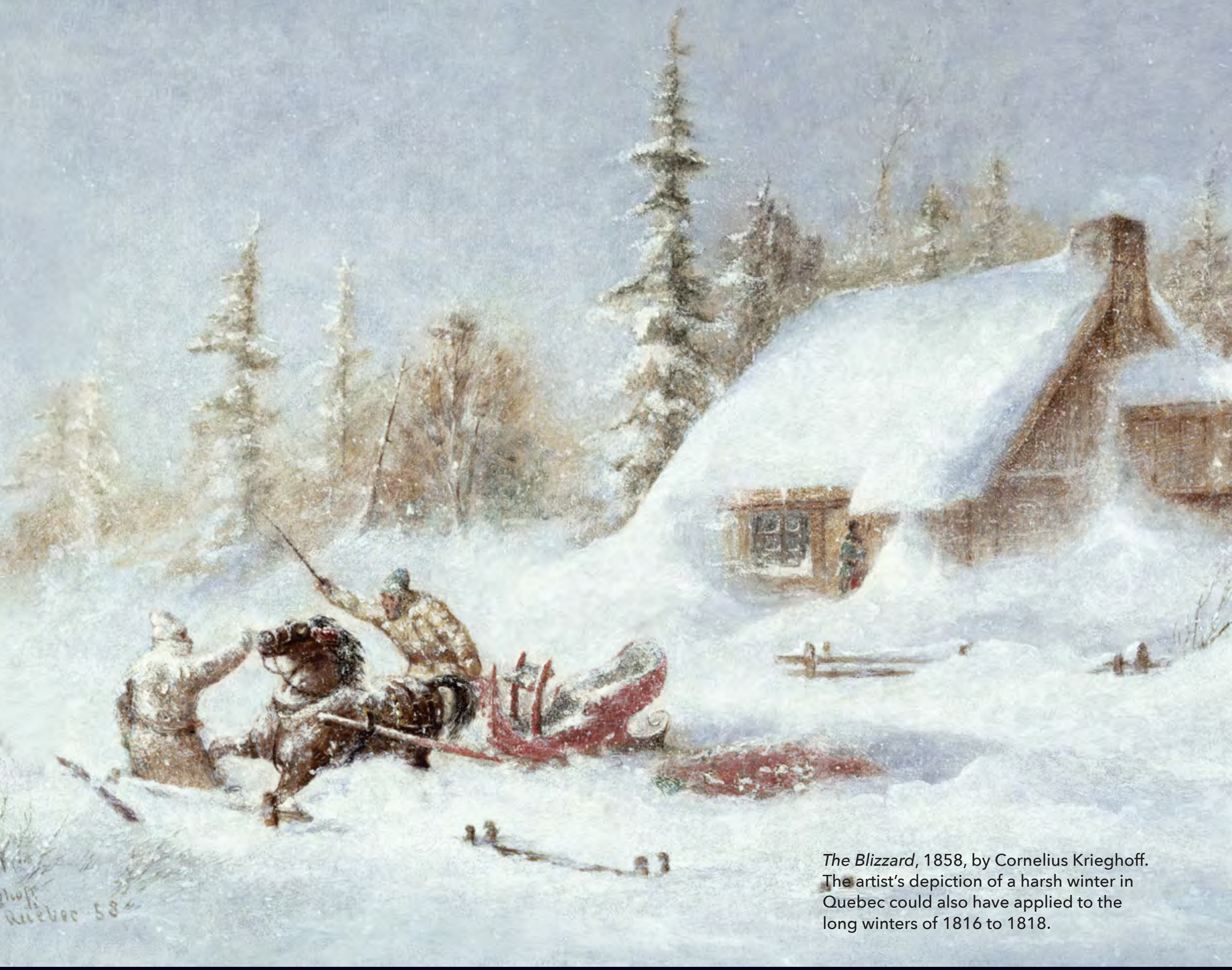
Hannay's racism is all the more disturbing because he is supposed to be the hero of the story – Buchan portrays him as courageous, smart, resourceful, and gentlemanly. Did Buchan share Hannay's attitude toward blacks?

J. William Galbraith, author of the 2013 biography *John Buchan: Model Governor General*, thinks it's a mistake to equate Hannay's attitudes with Buchan's.

"It's not the way that Buchan spoke. It's not the way that he thought. It's a reflection of the way people talked. You can't write accurately about the period in fiction without those references," he said. "Buchan himself had a deep humanity. His deep humanity stretched beyond the 'white races.'"

Galbraith points out that, as Governor General, Buchan interceded with Prime Minister William Lyon MacKenzie King to provide better health care in Aboriginal communities.

But professor Michael Gnarowski believes that Hannay's attitudes may well have been a reflection of Buchan's own, perhaps unconscious, beliefs – at least at the time he wrote the books. "He was a staunch British imperialist. They wanted to make Africa another India: to make it one grand British possession, the entire continent," Gnarowski said. "When you're involved in that kind of activity, you have to rationalize it somehow." – *Kate Jaimet*



The Blizzard, 1858, by Cornelius Krieghoff. The artist's depiction of a harsh winter in Quebec could also have applied to the long winters of 1816 to 1818.

THE BIG CHILL

Two centuries ago, much of the world was left in the cold during what became known as the Year Without a Summer. *by Alan MacEachern*

GIVING A HISTORICAL EVENT A NAME – ESPECIALLY a catchy name — has its drawbacks. A name can give an event too defined a shape, solidify it while making it smaller, like water beading on a surface. So it is with the name given to 1816 — the Year Without a Summer.

The Year Without a Summer refers to what followed the global impact of a volcanic eruption on the Indonesian island of Sumbawa. When Mount Tambora erupted in the spring of 1815, it spewed about fifty cubic kilometres of rock, ash, and dust high into the air. Some of the particles remained suspended in the atmosphere for months, even years, effectively blocking some of the sun's heat. What was by far the largest eruption in recorded history had the effect of cooling the planet's surface. This led to widespread crop failures around the world.

Hunger throughout Europe led to outbreaks of disease and food riots. Eastern North America also experienced intense bouts of cold weather in 1816, creating hardship for thousands of people. But the eruption's impact was not restricted to one season, or even one year. Nor was the impact felt equally everywhere.

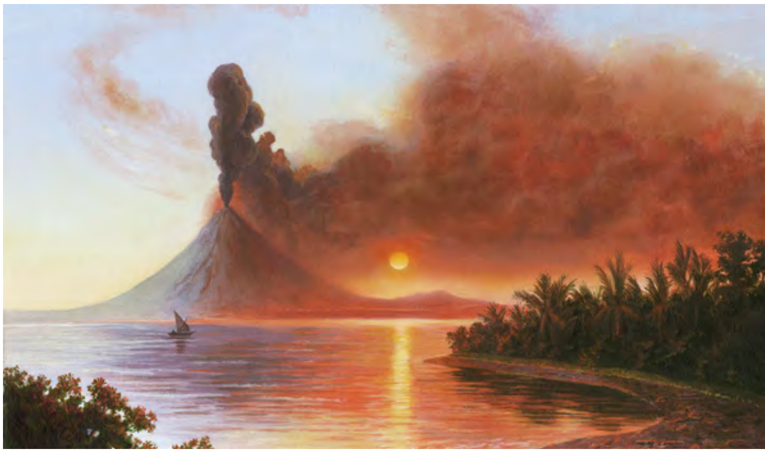
Because eastern Canada did not receive the worst of this cold — and maybe because we expect Canada to be cold — the year has never been thought to be particularly momentous here. A 1986 article in the *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society* calls the nickname "Year Without a Summer" a "gross exaggeration" in reference to Canada.

The newspapers, diaries, and government records of 1816 show that there was a summer that year, but they also show that British North Americans were affected greatly by wild weather patterns. What's more, the focus on the conditions of 1816 has obscured the years that came before and after. Parts of Canada had already suffered several poor harvests in a row, so 1816's bad weather threatened the colonies with extreme food shortages, making 1817 a year of deprivation for many.

The winter of 1816 was not particularly cold in eastern Canada, but the spring made up for it. Snow remained on the ground, and more fell, long into May. In some places, livestock began to starve from want of grass. Only at the end of the month did the backward season begin to relent. The *Quebec Gazette* of June 6 noted that the late frosts did not seem to have done farmers much harm: "A few fine days, and the present rains, have restored the young crops to all their former vigor." But immediately below this article, the newspaper reported "Most Extraordinary Weather": a foot of snow had fallen in the city that very day.

It is this early June weather system for which 1816 is best known. Snow and cold swept deep into the eastern United States, doing greater damage the farther south they went, since crops were farther along and so more susceptible. But Canada certainly felt its effects, too. In Quebec City, ice "as thick as a dollar" killed vegetation. Trees shed their leaves. Newborn spring sheep and calves died from the cold. Flocks of migratory birds "dropped down dead in the streets," according to the *Gazette*. In central New Brunswick, Tredway Thomas Odber Miles wrote in his diary on June 8, "Wonderful to behold. The snow covers the face of the earth one inch deep. Peas up in the garden but appear very much alarmed at the sight of snow." Although the snow soon melted, the cold weather lasted a couple more weeks throughout most of British North America. A Halifax newspaper would later rate that June "a tolerable month of March."

Further west in what is now Manitoba, settlement was only just beginning. The Selkirk settlers arrived in the Red River Valley in 1812. They too experienced a colder than usual summer in 1816. Peter Fidler of the Hudson's Bay Company at Brandon wrote of a severe cold spell that began on June 5. "A very sharp frost at night … killed all the Barley, Wheat, Oats and garden stuff above the ground except lettuce and onions — the Oak leaves just coming out are as if they are singed by fire and dead." The following summer was also relatively cold, with killer frosts in July. The cold summers on the prairies ended in 1818, but a drought that accompanied them persisted until 1819.

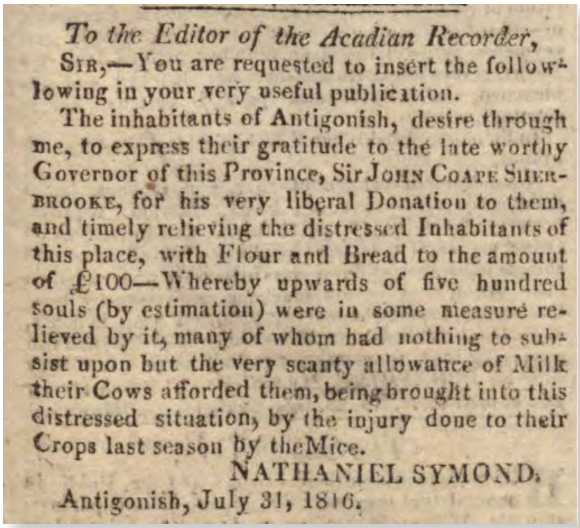

Mount Tambora erupting in 1815, an illustration that appeared on the cover of the 2015 book *Year Without Summer: 1816*.

In Eastern Canada, the cold spell's most profound, immediate impact was that the price of flour soared throughout the colonies. This was of great concern to a Canadian population that received about half of its calories from bread alone.

It was not merely that wheat is particularly susceptible to cold, and that the 1816 wheat harvest was thus now in doubt, but that the colonies had been banking on a good harvest after a run of bad ones. On July 15, the *Quebec Gazette* reported, "We are sorry to learn from unquestionable authority, that great distress prevails in many parishes throughout this province from a scarcity of food. Bread and milk is the common food of the poorer classes at this season of the year; but many of them have no bread; they support a miserable existence, by boiling wild herbs of different sorts, which they eat with their milk."

Some locales reported a bright side to the weather, noting that

ABOVE LEFT: BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY. ABOVE RIGHT: ROB WOOD/WOOD RONASVILLE HARLIN, INC.



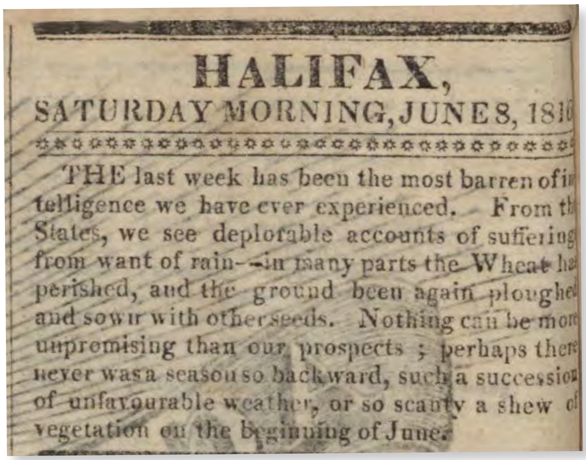
To the Editor of the Acadian Recorder,

Sir,—You are requested to insert the followlowing in your very useful publication.

The inhabitants of Antigonish, desire through me, to express their gratitude to the late worthy Governor of this Province, Sir John Coape Sherbrooke, for his very liberal Donation to them, and timely relieving the distressed Inhabitants of this place, with Flour and Bread to the amount of £100—Whereby upwards of five hundred souls (by estimation) were in some measure relieved by it, many of whom had nothing to subsist upon but the very scanty allowance of Milk their Cows afforded them, being brought into this distressed situation, by the injury done to their Crops last season by the Mice.

NATHANIEL SYMOND.

Antigonish, July 31, 1816.



HALIFAX,

SATURDAY MORNING, JUNE 8, 181

THE last week has been the most barren of i telligence we have ever experienced. From th States, we see deplorable accounts of suffering from want of rain—in many parts the Wheat ha perished, and the ground been again ploughe and sown with other seeds. Nothing can be mor unpromising than our prospects ; perhaps there never was a season so backward, such a successio of unfavourable weather, or so scanty a shew o vegetation on the beginning of June.

Above: Eastern Canada newspapers from 1816 report poor crops. One states that "never was a season so backward."

Opposite page: The cloudy skies of *Weymouth Bay*, 1816, by John Constable, suggest volcanic dust from the Tambora volcano.

the snow in June actually protected crops from the accompanying frost. The cold also killed destructive pests, in particular the Hessian fly, which had been a scourge on Canadian grain crops for the previous decade. Late June brought some hot days to eastern North America, which prompted Rev. Elias Scovil to deliver a sunny sermon to his Kingston, New Brunswick, congregation. "For the winter is past, the rain is over and gone," he said, quoting from the *Song of Solomon*. "The flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of the birds is come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land."

With the exception of a cold snap in July, the weather for the rest of the year was actually quite seasonal.

Reports from throughout the colonies agreed that, although it would be a bad year for hay and fruit in particular, the good quantity and/or quality of crops such as potatoes, peas, barley, oats, and, above all, wheat made up for it. The conditions held long enough that farmers in most places gathered an abundant harvest.

But the late spring had meant late planting, and late planting meant a late harvest, so severe frost at the end of September and snow in early October devastated crops still in the field across Lower Canada (Quebec) and New Brunswick. The St. Lawrence Valley below Quebec City was particularly hard-hit.

Even those not yet experiencing hunger had every reason to anticipate it: The harvest was lost, food reserves were spent, and bread and fuel prices were high. Furthermore, poor labourers knew that there would be less work available in winter and that it typically paid a quarter to a half less than in summertime. Well before winter set in, the residents of the parishes outside Quebec called on the government for relief.

The year 1816 is known for its freakish June snows, but the winter weather of 1817 was far more meaningful. After a January and first half of February that were terrifically cold, winter held on right through to May. The St. Lawrence froze faster and farther downriver than it had in fifty years. The *Nova Scotia Royal Gazette* likewise reported that men had sleighed far into the Northumberland Strait "without seeing open water, a circumstance not within the memory of the oldest settler in the place."

Amid this chill, and on the heels of meagre harvests, the poor of all the colonies experienced varying measures of what was universally called "distress." As many as three thousand people in the suburbs of Montreal, twenty per cent of the population, were reported to be without food or fuel. There was alarming scarcity among the unfortunate of Halifax, with the threat of "robbery or starvation" sure to follow. The entire population of Newfoundland suffered from lack of food, punishing weather, and being completely cut off from the rest of the world. Found in the ashes of a St. John's fire were forty barrels of potatoes that the owner had been selling on the black market at outrageous prices.

In Quebec City, an inquest was held into the death of a child, Maria Louisa Beleau, who with her mother and sisters lived in a hovel with bare earthen floors, no windows, and a hole in the roof for a chimney, for those times when they could afford to build a fire. The jury found that she had died of "a violent sore throat, and cold, produced by exposure to the inclemency of the weather."

Colonial governments had foreseen the looming food crisis and did what they could to prevent and prepare for it. As early as October 1816, Prince Edward Island Lieutenant-Governor C.D. Smith banned the export of agricultural products from the Island. The other colonies soon followed suit — all but Upper Canada (Ontario), which had largely escaped the bad harvests and whose wheat would be needed to feed the other colonies. This was as much interference in the market as some legislators would tolerate. When Lower Canada's council was told that the people of Kamouraska had eaten the last of their cattle and were on the verge of starvation, the Speaker argued that at most an interest-free loan should be granted, that the region was in fact sufficiently well-off to buy food of its own.

Many believed that the poor should be made to work — one suggestion was to have them shovel snow into the streets to assist the sleighing. Yet it was generally understood that the most desperate were often in no position, physically or geographically, to travel for work and that, more to the point, wintertime unemployment and the resultant deprivation had become an endemic part of Canadian society. In the crisis of the winter of 1817, governments focused on providing relief. Lower Canada, for example, distributed £15,000

NICHE

BRIDGEMAN ART ARCHIVES

The post-Tambora period could be more accurately called "the years without," or, better still, "the years without, for some."

(comparable to about $2 million today) worth of food and voted to lay out the same again. Newfoundland purchased more than 100,000 pounds of flour from the commissariat, the supply office for British forces in the colony. Relief also took the form of seed grain — Lower Canada set aside a loan fund for farmers purchasing seed.

What's striking is that in newspapers and government debates no one blamed the distress on the weather of 1816 alone: Farming practices, the nature of colonial and international trade, structural poverty, and other factors were believed to have played their part. Lower Canada's legislature declared it "a subject worthy of investigation, whether other circumstances than an unpropitious season have not had a share in producing the present scarcity…."

On the first of May, 1817, citizens of Quebec City rode out across the St. Lawrence River in carrioles, carts, and sleighs and, as if to summon the end of a seemingly endless winter, planted maypoles in the ice. They were successful, apparently; the ice finally broke up three days later. Twenty vessels from Montreal soon appeared, laden with seed grain for the distressed eastern end of the colony.

Good weather came and stayed all that summer across the British North American colonies. "A finer season for seed time and crops generally never was known," Governor General Earl Dalhousie would say that fall, while in Nova Scotia. "All Canada, as well as this Province, rejoices in the prospects we have at present."

Yet not all locales fared equally well. Parts of Upper Canada, having missed the worst of the 1816 weather, lost crops to rust disease and frost in the fall of 1817. St. John's, Newfoundland, still suffering, was hit first by fire that fall and then by the coldest winter on record. Tambora's severe effect on British North America's weather began to dissipate only in 1818.

The post-Tambora period could be more accurately called "the years without," or, better still, "the years without, for some." Of course, at some point, a too-inclusive name loses not just catchiness but meaning. Pulling apart the perceived simplicity of this moment in climate history can be a valuable reminder that climate has never been singular; it has never meant a single type of weather experienced in all places by all people.

And, as in the past, so in the future: "Climate change" (let alone "global warming") is far too simple a term for what we have to look forward to.

// Learn more at CanadasHistory.ca/YearWithoutSummer

Michel Hogue is the author of *Metis and the Medicine Line: Creating a Border and Dividing a People.*

JAMES PARK

Q&A

Borderlands

For the Metis, the forty-ninth parallel was first a blessing, then a curse.

Author Michel Hogue's Metis and the Medicine Line: Creating a Border and Dividing a People *has received high marks for its exploration of the border between Western Canada and the United States and its impact on the Metis. Grounded in extensive research in U.S. and Canadian archives, Hogue's account illuminates how the Metis and other indigenous peoples were at the centre of the sometimes violent history of the forty-ninth parallel. Hogue, who grew up in Manitoba's Red River Valley, is an assistant professor in the department of history at Carleton University in Ottawa.* Canada's History *senior editor Nelle Oosterom recently spoke with Hogue.*

What story are you telling in this book?
This book has two storylines: The first is the emergence of the plains Metis communities in the nineteenth century, and the second is the creation and enforcement of the Canada-U.S. border along the forty-ninth parallel. The book traces how those Metis communities in places like the Red River Valley and the northeastern plains emerged at the contested edges of the fur trade empires and the edges of the border with the United States. It's about how they used those boundaries to create a vibrant society and economy that took advantage initially of the divisions that the border marked.

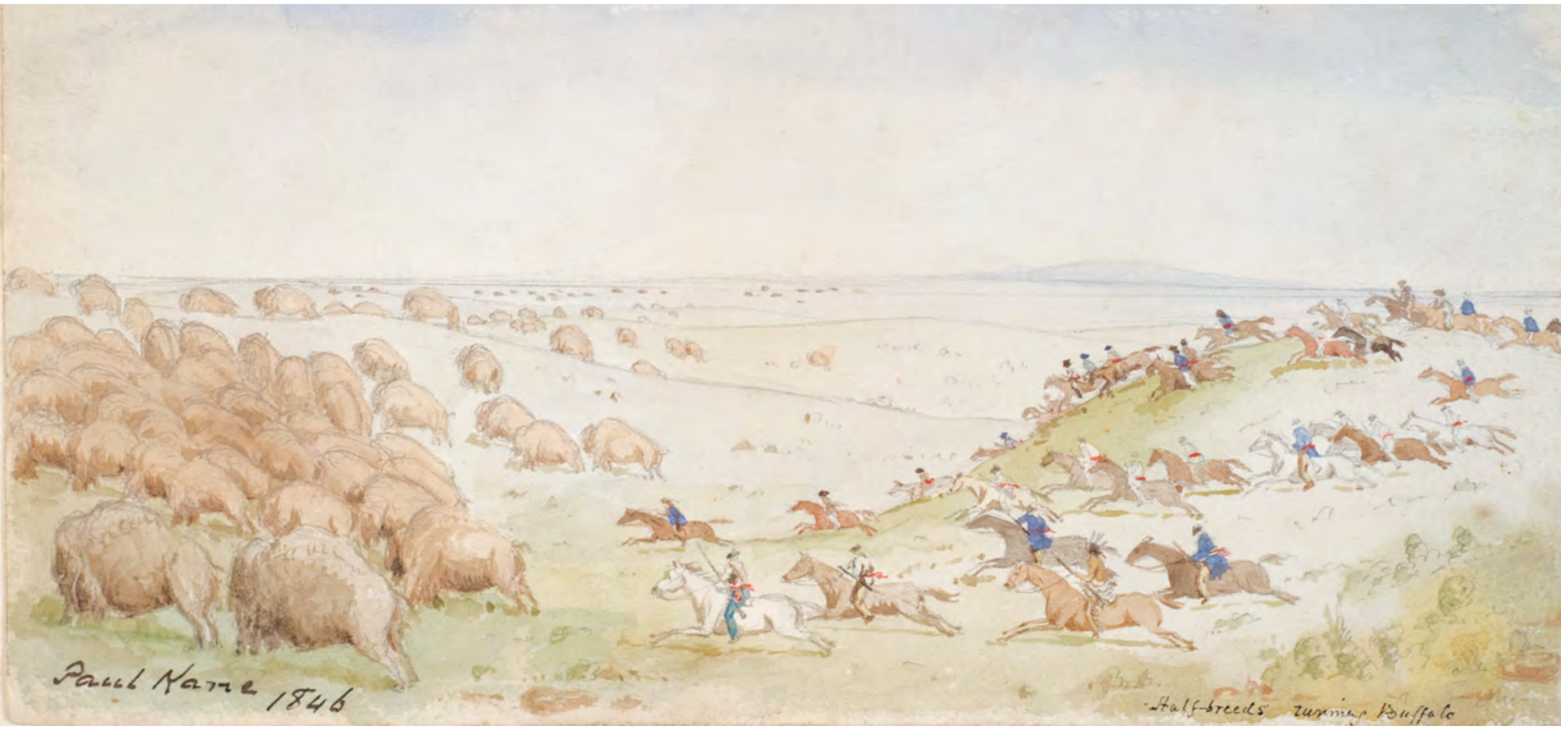
The arc of the story suggests in some way how that was very successful as a strategy for many decades.

But with the collapse of the buffalo — the heart of their mobile economy — and with the growth of the power of the American and Canadian governments, much of the basis of those borderland Metis communities was swept away in the nineteenth century. The book tries to look at what happened to these mobile Metis communities.

How did the Metis define the borders of their own territory?
The borders were defined in part by kinship. They dedicated themselves to mobile buffalo hunting, and that meant going through territories that were inhabited by others. The Metis were able to do so in part because they were related to the Cree, the Assiniboine, the Saulteaux, the Anishinaabe. They moved through those territories in concert with members of those groups.

How did the Metis help to make the Canada-U.S. border?
The most obvious way was in the mundane tasks of helping to survey the border. The work of the boundary commission in the 1870s was really conducted with the labour and expertise of Metis men and women who worked as guides, interpreters, hunters, and who supplied the intelligence and shelter that the commission needed as it worked its way west.

The cart trails they used had long been blazed by Metis traders and hunt-



Metis Chasing the Main Buffalo Herd, 1846, by Paul Kane (1810–71), watercolour and pencil on paper, 13 x 23 cm.

STARK MUSEUM OF ART, ORANGE, TX, 31.78.127

ers. That speaks to the Metis presence and their groundedness in those territories.

Another, less concrete way they helped make the border was that people like the Metis accepted, acknowledged, and sometimes challenged that border — which until then had been an abstract concept devised in the councils of Europe. The actions of Metis and indigenous traders, in their movement across the border, made administrators think about who belonged where. The best example is what happened when Metis traders in Canada began trafficking arms across the border into the United States in the 1870s. They were seen to be aiding peoples like the Dakota against the American army. Those kinds of actions made clear to faraway administrators the stakes of that border. It brought the border to life.

How were the Metis treated differently in Canada versus the United States?

Until recently, the term Metis wasn't used very commonly in the United States — unlike in Canada, which had a long history of the fur trade, of distinct Metis communities, and had a legal category for Metis since 1870. Typically, the Metis who remained in the United States faced the choice of being absorbed into tribal communities on reservations or living off-reservation, often in precarious situations, which meant a very fragmented existence.

Your book talks about how some Metis families literally straddled the border and dealt with governments on both sides. How did that work?

The same family groups would have encounters with authorities on one side of the border looking for recognition of their rights and a few years later do the same on the other side of the border. There's a particular family that recurred, by virtue of their life as traders and hunters, that show up at key moments, sometimes as signatures on applications for homesteads, or as applicants for benefits resulting from treaties, on both sides of the border. They could do that because legitimately they had claims in both countries — and in some cases it was a cagey political move and a way to make a living in increasingly difficult circumstances.

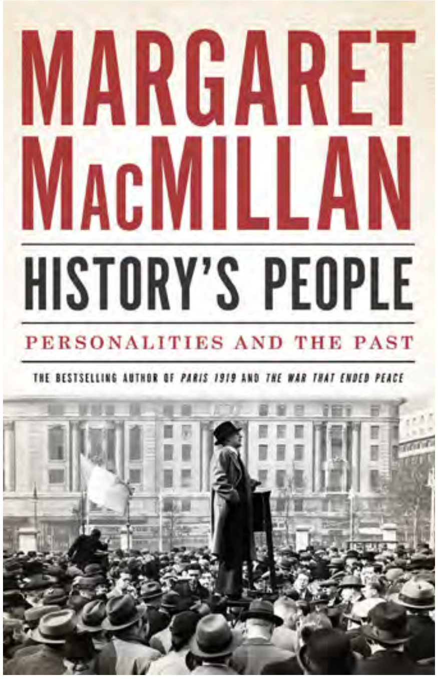
How did the collapse of the buffalo affect the Metis?

The collapse in the late 1870s, early 1880s was rapid, and it was a key pivot point in plains history. It took away the basic means of subsistence for the Metis and indigenous people.

The Metis on the borderlands had fully committed to the buffalo hunt. Their communities were large, were well-armed, were relatively well-off, and they were a force to be reckoned with. When the buffalo collapsed, that marked the fragmentation of these communities, as people had to make difficult choices about where they would move to. Some entered treaties, some took homesteads.

Their situation was complicated by the presence of a new and powerful settler society that was ever more determined to remake the prairie West. There was more enforcement of border laws and the boundaries between Indian and non-Indian land. That was a kind of one-two blow for these communities.

Michel Hogue's book Metis and the Medicine Line *won the Canadian Historical Association's 2016 Clio Prize for the Prairies region. It was also shortlisted for the CHA's top award, the Sir John A. MacDonald Prize, and was a finalist for the 2016 Canada Prize in the Humanities.*


MARGARET MACMILLAN
HISTORY'S PEOPLE
PERSONALITIES AND THE PAST
THE BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF PARIS 1919 AND THE WAR THAT ENDED PEACE

CHARACTER TRAITS

History's People: Personalities and the Past

by Margaret MacMillan
House of Anansi Press,
400 pages, $24.95

This book is a compilation of the CBC-Massey lectures delivered in 2015, under the broad umbrella of the title *History's People*, with sections headed Persuasion and the Art of Leadership, Hubris, Daring, Curiosity, and Observers. Margaret MacMillan (a friend of this reviewer for many years) draws effectively on several of her books to present a very varied group of historical subjects.

MacMillan's persuasive leaders are German Prince Otto von Bismarck, U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Canadian Prime Minster William Lyon Mackenzie King. This selection allows a good contrast between Bismarck's work of persuading the German emperor and Roosevelt's challenges of persuading the American public, and it is good to see King's often-disparaged abilities presented clearly. All three leaders were in the vanguard in their countries in placating the working and agrarian classes. (Bismarck's emperor acknowledged to his chancellor fears that someday they would be taken out from their offices and beheaded in the square outside their windows.) MacMillan doesn't fall into the Yalta trap, so beloved of British historians, which suggests that Roosevelt was tricked by Stalin (bunk, I say), and she gives King full credit for weaving desperately through the conscription crises of the Second World War.

The Hubris chapter is slightly more tenuous. MacMillan's main point is that Margaret Thatcher, Adolf Hitler, and Joseph Stalin all squandered great political capital, and in the first two cases ultimately failed, because of overconfident overreaching. She blames Thatcher's fall on the so-called poll tax that fixed public-service costs from homes to individuals. I was closely involved in British politics at that time, and I think Europe was a greater problem. It is not the least of current ironies that most Britons today would enthusiastically endorse her then relatively moderate Euro-skepticism. Hitler's mortal failure is said to have been the invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941. This is true, but his reasoning was not insane: He believed that if he didn't get rid of Russia before Roosevelt brought the United States into the war, he would suffer precisely the fate that ultimately crushed him. Stalin is lumbered with the failed collectivization of agriculture, a humanitarian and economic disaster, but Stalin survived it and continued as Russian leader to 1953. His greatest mistake was precipitating the Cold War, but he did not live to see the end of it in the disintegration of the Soviet Union and Soviet Communism.

MacMillan ambitiously groups together Lord Beaverbrook, Richard Nixon, and Samuel de Champlain.

The Daring section ambitiously groups Lord Beaverbrook, Richard Nixon, and Samuel de Champlain. MacMillan reposes what is now obsolete confidence in the theory that Nixon actually broke laws in the Watergate scandal, rather than simply bungling the investigation (something he conceded). But her main point is correct: that one of the most successful presidential terms in U.S. history, which included the opening of relations with China, was for a time overshadowed by the Watergate nonsense. Beaverbrook made the daring move from Canada to Britain; but once he had become a rich underwriter in Montreal, he wasn't actually risking much. Champlain was amazingly daring, dedicating most of his adult life to setting up a New France in a most inhospitable environment. He is rightly credited for his appreciation of indigenous peoples, but the author underplays the disparity in social development between the Europeans and the Aboriginals of New France, who had not invented the wheel or iron tools, serious agriculture, or permanent buildings.

The Curiosity section deals with British colonial women, including Elizabeth Simcoe, wife of John Graves Simcoe (in India), the redoubtable Gertrude Bell (Iraq), and Edith Durham (Albania). These are specialties of the author, and she handles them exceptionally well. The last section, Observers, groups famous diarists from Samuel Pepys, to the fabulous Mongol-Indian emperor Babur, to Canadians Robert de Roquebrune, Marcel Trudel, and Charles Ritchie, the German boulevardier Harry Kessler, and the Holocaust avoider (without leaving Germany) Victor Klemperer. In these less well-travelled areas, MacMillan is particularly sure-footed (even though pre-Quiet Revolution Quebec was not quite the Dark Age she presents from Trudel, and the priest-ridden *ancien régime* did preserve the French fact in North America for nearly two hundred years).

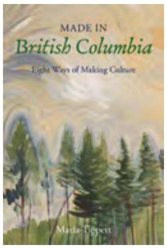
This book is, as anyone who knows the author and her work would expect, a very lively collection of cameo portraits of remarkable historic personalities. It is also a fine addition for the camp of those who believe that people make history and not the reverse.

Reviewed by **Conrad Black**, a financier, columnist, and historian whose most recent book is *Rise to Greatness: The History of Canada from the Vikings to the Present*. He was the chairman of Telegraph Newspapers (U.K.) from 1987 to 2004, and of the Argus and Hollinger companies in Canada and the U.S. from 1978 to 2004. He founded the *National Post* in 1998 and has been a member of the British House of Lords since 2001.

FACETS OF CREATION

Made in British Columbia: Eight Ways of Making Culture

by Maria Tippett
Harbour Publishing,
272 pages, $32.95



Over the last three decades, historian Maria Tippett has written more than a dozen books about Canadian arts and culture, including award-winning biographies of artists Emily Carr and Bill Reid. In her latest book, *Made in British Columbia: Eight Ways of Making Culture*, she returns to Carr and Reid and considers them alongside six other "cultural producers" with ties to the province she now calls home. Her goal, as explained in the epilogue, is to tell "the story of how British Columbia's culture was shaped during the twentieth century."

The book begins slightly before Tippett's target century, with an Englishman who became "British Columbia's most famous architect of the province-building era from the 1890s to the end of the First World War." Francis Mawson Rattenbury arrived in B.C. in 1892 and began work on his most illustrious commission, the young province's new legislative buildings, a year later. He went on to design numerous other landmarks throughout the province, most notably the Empress Hotel in Victoria, before returning to England in 1930. Although his continuing fame results partly from his sensational death — he was murdered by his wife's lover in 1935 — there's no doubt that he left a lasting mark on the province's architectural character.

Tippett devotes one biography-style chapter to each of her eight subjects, sketching out a loose chronological progression through to the 1990s, where she ends the book with another architect, Arthur Erickson. In between, we meet novelist Martin Grainger, painter Emily Carr, writer and editor George Woodcock, playwright George Ryga, composer Jean Coulthard, and sculptor Bill Reid. Tippett's writing is scholarly and extensively footnoted, a boon for those who wish to dig deeper. In the first four chapters, she frequently employs anecdotes and colourful historical details that lighten the tone and provide momentum. Unfortunately, these elements are largely absent from the latter half of the book, in which the accounts tend to read more like professional resumés, albeit impressive ones, than stories.

The blurb on the back jacket asks, "Is there such a thing as British Columbia culture, and if so, is there anything special about it?" and it tells us that Tippett's answer to this "broad question [is] an assured 'yes!'" Yet nowhere in the book does she actually offer a definition of B.C. culture or explain what's special about it. In the epilogue, Tippett alludes to the influence of "the province's unique geography and its relative isolation from the rest of the world," but she gives equal attention to the "various way in which cultural impact came from outside of the province" — from the epiphany about forests that Carr experienced while studying in England to Japanese and Arabic influences on Erickson's architectural style. Ultimately, she seems content to let readers come up with their own explanations based on the eight biographies.

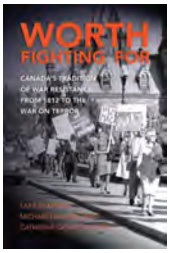
Nor does Tippett address the question of why she selected these particular culture makers as her subjects: six men and two women, most of them from relatively privileged backgrounds (Ryga is the notable exception), all but one of them white (Reid was half Haida). To her credit, she does grapple with the disparity in cultural opportunities for twentieth-century British Columbians, noting that "such inequities influence the way that our cultural history is written and who is chosen for attention." Because of social prejudices, talented individuals like Chinese-Canadian photographer C.D. Hoy, Tsimshian diarist Arthur Wellington Clah, Mennonite violin-maker Heinrich Friesen, and Japanese-Canadian artist Takao Tanabe were "silently excluded from the narrative," or denied a chance to gain early recognition, Tippett says. But she doesn't explain why she chose to perpetuate this Eurocentric view of the arts in her own narrative. As interesting as Tippett's eight culture makers are, I was left craving a more encompassing examination of British Columbia's unique cultural roots.

Reviewed by **Frances Backhouse**, whose books about Canadian history include *Women of the Klondike*, *Children of the Klondike*, *Hiking With Ghosts* and *Once They Were Hats: In Search of the Mighty Beaver*.

DISSENTING OPINIONS

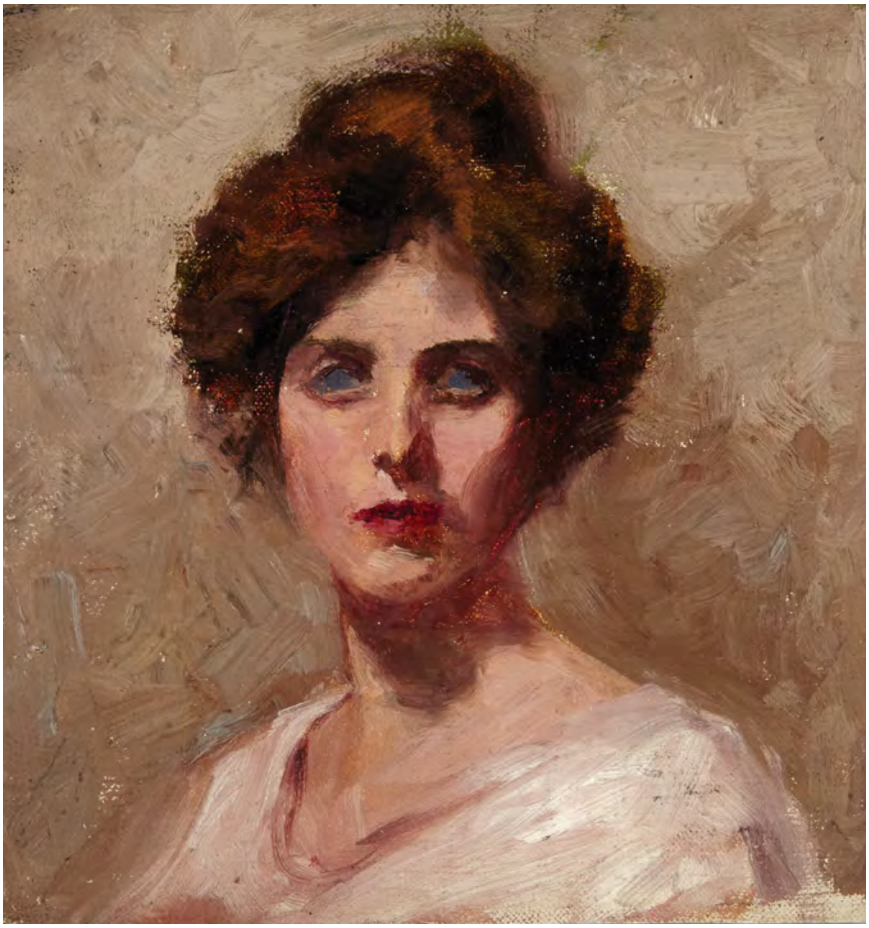
Worth Fighting For: Canada's Tradition of War Resistance from 1812 to the War on Terror

edited by Lara Campbell, Michael Dawson, and Catherine Gidney
Between the Lines, 321 pages, $34.95



Does Canada really have its own tradition of war resistance? Are such activities a significant part of our national narrative or merely an occasional side story? *Worth Fighting For*, a collection of essays published by Toronto's Between the Lines progressive press, offers an alternative to the military buffs who have dominated the interpretation of history in recent years. The book's contributors argue that war resistance should be understood to include all forms of opposition to state-sanctioned military violence and militarist culture.

Conscientious objection by faith-based individuals was an early part of Canadian pacifism. Opposition to war might also have overtly political motivations,



HER OWN EYES This small (17 x 17 cm) oil-on-canvas self-portrait was painted around 1901 by Bertha May Ingle. The artist was born in 1878 near Guelph, Ontario, grew up in Owen Sound, and later made Toronto her home. This and another of her paintings are among dozens of striking images featured in *The Artist Herself: Self-Portraits by Canadian Historical Women Artists*, edited by Alicia Boutilier and Tobi Bruce (Agnes Etherington Art Centre and Art Gallery of Hamilton, 174 pages, $35) as well as in the eponymously titled exhibition, which closes in Hamilton on September 11.

PRIVATE COLLECTION. PHOTO MIKE LAICH

notably in anti-imperialism, French-Canadian nationalism, international peace activism, or, most recently, objections to the practices of the "war on terror."

In their focused introduction, the editors argue "that over-emphasizing military history while ignoring resistance to war is a simplification of our past … and the relationships among citizens, dissenters, resisters, activists and the military." Their book presents seventeen essays that vary in length and depth, exploring older issues such as pacifism during the War of 1812 as well as more modern events.

One recent episode was the 1964 civil disobedience campaign at La Macaza, Quebec — site of a controversial BOMARC anti-aircraft missile base. The author, Bruce Douville, examines this well-publicized protest and explains that it did not succeed in stopping the deployment of nuclear warheads in Canada. Still, he concludes optimistically that these protests helped to create an effective organizing model for New Left activism during the later 1960s and the 1970s.

The help given to many Americans escaping the Vietnam War military draft is the theme of another essay. Contrary to later popular opinion, the federal government did not welcome draft dodgers into Canada. Immigration officials often blocked their entry, while legal changes by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau's government made applying for landed-immigrant status much more difficult. It took a broad range of liberal-minded campaigners, together with committed political activists, to open Canada's doors to an estimated thirty-six thousand Americans.

The most current essay topic deals with the treatment of American soldiers who have sought sanctuary to avoid fighting in Iraq. Canada's reception thus far has been frigid, with officials arguing that American deserters do not deserve the support given to draft-evaders in the 1960s. Refuge has not been granted here. The essay concludes that this policy is contrary to international obligations.

While this collection is interesting and provocative, I react skeptically because it provides so little evidence on the effectiveness of war resistance. (Note that I also respond skeptically to historians who are eloquent about Canadian identity being nourished by blood sacrifice on distant battlefields.) There are only a few essays where actual numbers are relayed — such as the estimated one hundred protesters in La Macaza in 1964.

There is also a writing style in the collection that infuses some texts with sweeping generalizations, implying how Canadians have seethed in anti-war revolt. "Workers and farmers … resisted the power of the state to conscript," say the editors about the mood around both world wars. Notice the absence of limiting adjectives. (Maybe *some* workers resisted, or a *few* farmers.) Sadly, such language reads like a political tract.

We are on more solid ground to argue that war resistance sentiments, expressed clearly and directly, can influence how people think. Resistance may sway political decisions today, or feed the demand for government changes tomorrow.

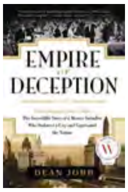
Altogether, this book provides a refreshing contribution to our country's history. It conveys a balancing description of some citizens' views on war and militarism, stressing the need to speak out despite being a political minority. Dissent is not disloyalty. Moral arguments and a peaceable militancy can influence a climate of opinion. Perhaps this sums up the essential tradition of Canadian war resisters.

Reviewed by **Victor Rabinovitch**, who for eleven years was the president of the Canadian Museum of Civilization and the Canadian War Museum. He teaches public policy at Queen's University.

MORE BOOKS

Empire of Deception: The Incredible Story of a Master Swindler Who Seduced a City and Captivated a Nation

by Dean Jobb
Harper Avenue, 348 pp., $29.99



Before there was Bernie Madoff, there was Leo Koretz, a master swindler who, in early twentieth-century Chicago, enticed hundreds of people to invest as much as $30 million dollars — and then simply vanished.

Dean Jobb presents the story of Koretz, who was known by his early classmates, associates, and, eventually, by family and friends as someone who could "get blood from a turnip." A victim of a swindle himself, Koretz parlayed his misfortune into his own scheme, drawing in friends, family, and close associates, including his own rabbi, before it collapsed in 1923.

Jobb traces the thrilling story of deception, following Koretz from Chicago, to New York, to Nova Scotia, where he reinvented himself as a wealthy, bookish man with an eye for the ladies, hosting lavish parties at Pinehurst, a hunting lodge in south-central Nova Scotia. *Empire of Deception* portrays the details of the Koretz swindle and its human cost — from the nervous breakdown of his wife, Mae, to the feelings of bewilderment and disappointment of Nova Scotians who had enjoyed his hospitality.

Jobb's book is a thrilling read — a journey through the evasive American dream of easy wealth and its inevitable demise. — *Karine Duhamel*

The Little Third Reich on Lake Superior: A History of Canadian Internment Camp R

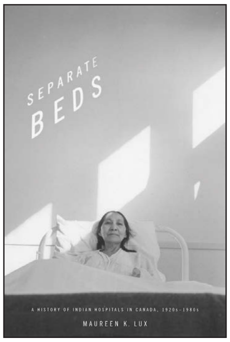
by Ernest Robert Zimmerman
University of Alberta Press, 380 pp., $29.95

The Little Third Reich on Lake Superior

An ocean away from the front lines of the Second World War, nestled in the forest of Northwestern Ontario, Internment Camp R housed 1,150 prisoners of war for eighteen months between 1940 and 1941. Author Ernest Robert Zimmerman, a former Lakehead University history professor, grew up in wartime Nazi Germany. His comprehensive book sheds light on a slice of history that brought European prisoners of war and other internees to an isolated Canadian community.

Zimmerman's thorough research, along with numerous photos of daily life in Camp R, paints a vivid picture of life at the camp and the political context that spawned it. Meant to house "enemy alien" prisoners and internees who had been identified as too dangerous to be kept in Britain's camps, Camp R was in reality home to a hodgepodge of people who included German refugees (such as Jews and anti-Nazis), Nazis and their sympathizers, German nationals (some of whom had lived for decades in Britain), and German merchant seamen.

New from University of Toronto Press



Separate Beds
A History of Indian Hospitals in Canada, 1920s-1980s
by Maureen K. Lux
A disturbing look at the dark side of the liberal welfare state, *Separate Beds* reveals a history of racism and negligence in health care for Canada's First Nations that should never be forgotten.

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CANADA AND THE TWO WORLD WARS

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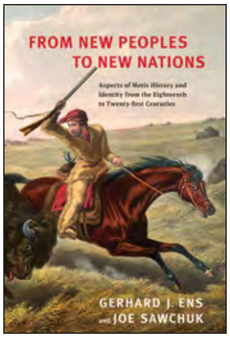
FROM NEW PEOPLES TO NEW NATIONS
GERHARD J. ENS AND JOE SAWCHUK

From New Peoples to New Nations
Aspects of Metis History and Identity from the Eighteenth to the Twenty-first Centuries
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Advancing Knowledge

This unlikely and politically incongruous collection made for a sometimes-volatile situation.

Completed after the author's death by two of Zimmerman's former students and fellow Lakehead professors, *The Little Third Reich on Lake Superior* is a fascinating look into the politics of wartime internment camps and the role Canada played as host to the unique group of internees at Camp R. — *Sandy Klowak*

It's Our Game: Celebrating 100 Years of Hockey Canada

by Michael McKinley
Viking, 432 pp., $39.95

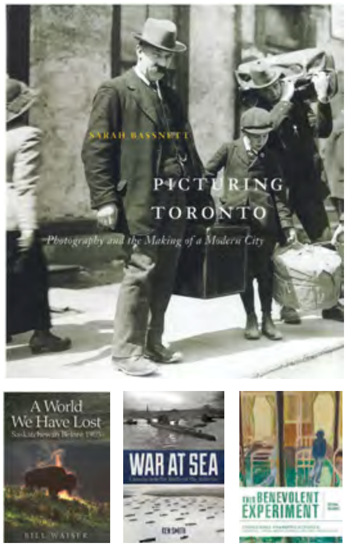
FOREWORD BY WAYNE GRETZKY
1914 2014
IT'S OUR GAME
CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF HOCKEY CANADA
MICHAEL MCKINLEY

Featuring a foreword written by Wayne Gretzky and an introduction by recent Hockey Canada president Bob Nicholson, *It's Our Game* provides a broad overview of the first hundred years of Hockey Canada, the sport's governing body in this country at the amateur level. Author Michael McKinley is a writer, journalist, documentary filmmaker, and screenwriter, and has written several books on hockey.

Illustrated with hundreds of photos, *It's Our Game* explores three main periods: up to 1945, 1946 to 1983, and 1984 to the present. One hundred brief chapters are presented in chronological order. They cover topics ranging from hockey during the war years, to *The Hockey Handbook* — which changed how the sport was conceived and taught — to Canada's women's team at the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics.

It's interesting to learn how long ago women's hockey was played. The women's game awarded its first championship trophy, the Lady Meredith Cup, in 1920, but women had been playing decades earlier. And, compared to what we see today, the equipment (or, more precisely, lack thereof!) worn by early players is remarkable.

It's Our Game is an interesting collection of bite-sized stories and makes an attractive addition to any library.
— *Danielle Chartier*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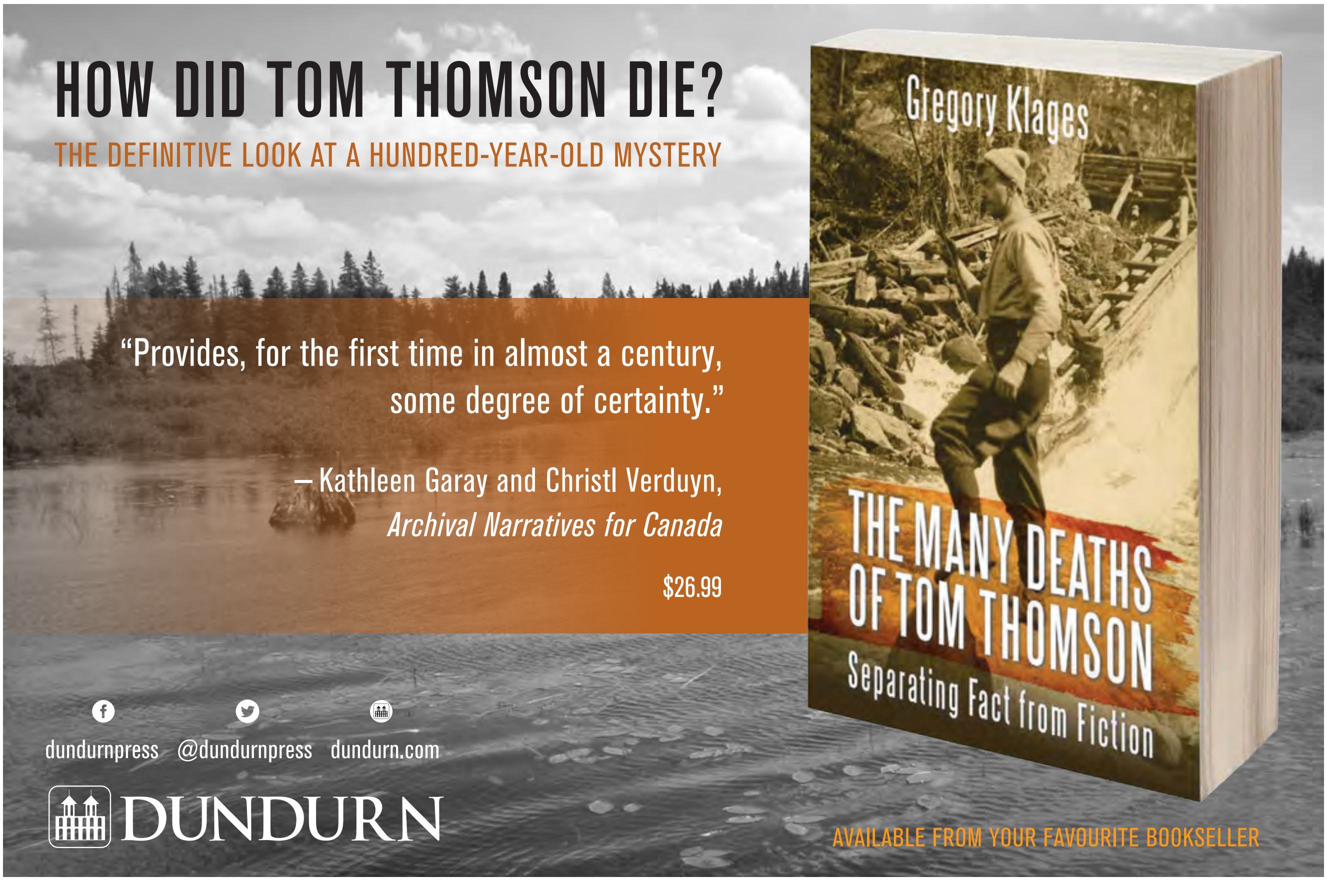
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Pack horses carry heavy loads somewhere along a British Columbia fur brigade trail, date unknown.

HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY ARCHIVES

The fur frontier

British Columbia's fur brigade trails abound with history. *by Heather Ramsay*

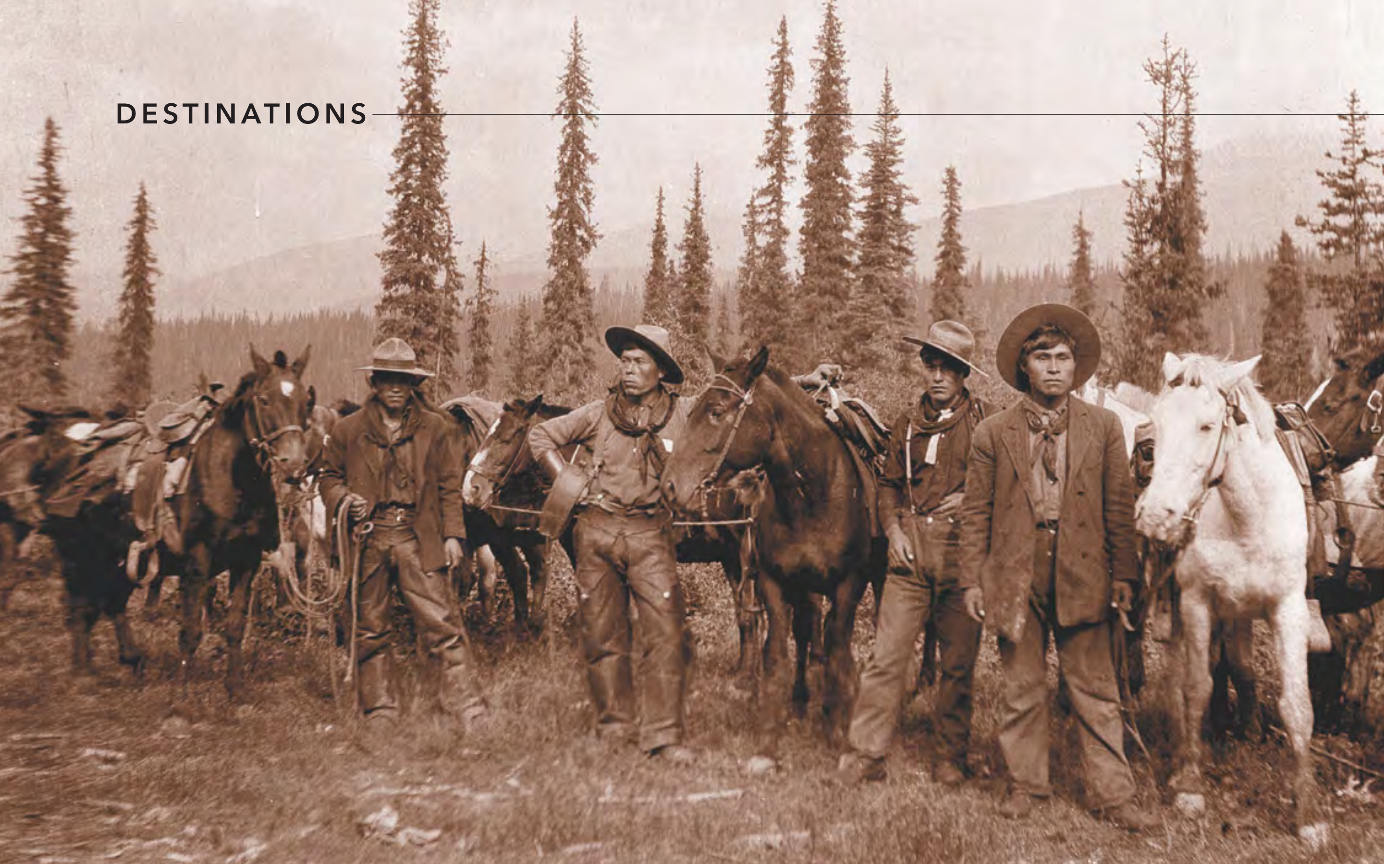
"HISTORY SHOULD BE LEARNED THROUGH the soles of our feet." These words are found at the head of the newly opened Hudson's Bay Company heritage trail, a seventy-five-kilometre route that allows hikers to follow the path fur traders took between the interior and the coast in the mid-1800s, in what is now British Columbia.

I crunch up a steep incline past the textured trunks of conifers and wonder how two hundred horses, carrying nearly eighty-two kilograms of trade goods — tobacco, guns, tools, and food — made it up this trail. I trip on a rock and imagine the brigades stumbling down these slopes with a winter's worth of valuable lynx, marten, and beaver furs.

This five-day destination trail, with all the backcountry modern conveniences — tent pads, outhouses, and benches — leads hikers between two little-known B.C. historical hotspots, Hope and Tulameen. Hope Mountain Centre director Kelly Pearce, who along with Kelley Cook of Princeton, B.C., spearheaded the six-year project, hopes the trek will end up on the bucket lists of hikers who seek out experiences like the province's West Coast Trail. Finding and rehabilitating the mid-nineteenth-century route began with the work of Harley Hatfield, an Okanagan Similkameen Parks Society member, who pored over old maps and documents in the 1960s and 1970s. He lived by his words, now immortalized on the trailhead sign, and learned from direct observation, too.

The trail offers an alpine adventure and helps to reveal important truths about the fur trade. Some people think First Nations were exploited during this early history, Pearce says. But she believes Aboriginal peoples "still had real power and sovereignty over their traditional territories prior to the [1858] gold rush, when thousands of outsiders suddenly arrived. The fur trade required close co-operation, intermarriage, and economic trade that benefited both groups."

First Nations were experienced traders and were invaluable in assisting the Xwelitem (hungry ones, in Halq'eméylem, the language of the Stó:lō) get settled in the area. At Fort Langley, which opened on the banks of the Fraser River in 1827, local high-ranking daughters ended up marrying fur traders and solidifying relationships that were beneficial to both parties. The fur-focused HBC even



Top: First Nations horse packers, circa 1890s. Stó:lō, Nlaka'pamux, and Similkameen members worked for the Hudson's Bay Company along the trail as trappers, cooks, packers, guides, and postal carriers. Many First Nations also traded directly with HBC forts, gaining access to valuable goods such as hunting rifles, cooking pots, and steel tools. Bottom: Hikers on the brigade trail near Mount Davis.

HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY ARCHIVES, HOPE MOUNTAIN CENTRE

adapted its trading strategies to accommodate the salmon and wild-harvested cranberries that the nearby Kwantlen brought to the exchange.

As a result, the salted salmon market became so popular in Hawaii that *lomi-lomi*, a tomato and salmon salad, is still required eating at every luau.

The HBC would never have found the trail I'm hiking without First Nations allies. According to Pearce, a Similkameen chief named Blackeye showed the HBC his hunting territory and helped to shape the backbone of the trail.

I search for signs of history as I walk. Pearce says you can see blazes gouged five centimetres deep into tree trunks and sections where the trail is worn more than half a metre deep into the terrain. But the chest-busting switchbacks divert my attention.

The Hope-to-Tulameen route helped to keep the area in British hands and set the scene for Canada's eventual creation, says Pearce. An easier path to travel along the wide and winding Columbia River was abandoned when the Oregon Treaty marked the forty-ninth parallel as the United States border.

The first all-British route pioneered in 1848 led brigades along the jagged mountaintops above the unnavigable Fraser River. Look in hiking guides for the First Brigade Trail or for Tikwalus Trail at Alexandra. Total losses that year included seventy horses and twenty-five bundles of merchandise.

I reach the top of the mountain at Deer Camp, or Camp de Chevreuil, the second overnight stop for the brigades, and think of the many indigenous people and company men who worked together on this trail in the early days.

The Hudson's Bay Company's role waned after British Columbia became a colony in 1858 and more settlers moved in. Soon the First Nations were pushed onto tiny reserves while the newcomers, with their notions of "progress," claimed more and more territory.

Many of these stories can be found on signs along the trail. But, since I'm learning history through my feet, I figure I've got a lot more walking ahead and a lot more to learn.

If you go, visit www.hopemountain.org for maps and the history of the trail.

Heather Ramsay is a freelance writer based in British Columbia's Fraser Valley.

CANADA'S
HISTORY

CANADA'S HISTORY SOCIETY
ANNUAL REPORT 2015

Kayak
OH CANADA!
CANADA'S
GREAT WAR ALBUM
OUR MEMORIES OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR
MARK COLLIN REID
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Canada's History 2015 Board of Directors (left to right): Chair David Ross, Stephen Thomas, Aritha van Herk, Dave Obee, History Society President & CEO Janet Walker, William Wicken, Sasha Mullally, Alex Graham, Michèle Dagenais, Sharon McAuley and W. John Bennett. Absent: Gordon Barnhart, Edward Kennedy, and Hugh Segal.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Our past shapes our future. These are the words that appear on the medals presented to some of our country's most extraordinary storytellers and winners of Governor General's History Awards. Every day, these individuals and organizations work hard to make it possible for new generations to share the stories of Canada.

Canada's National History Society — Canada's History for short — entered the year energized by a Strategy to 2020 that charts our course for the future.

There are four key elements that support the Strategy. The first, "Media as Meeting Place," recognizes that our print and online media is aimed at engaging more Canadians in the stories that make history come alive.

Our learning focus is described with the words "Educate, Celebrate and Inspire," giving voice to the people and projects that strengthen our understanding of Canada's past.

To achieve this, we "Communicate and Collaborate" with partners, educators, and investors who engage in dialogue around Canadian history.

Finally, we work to "Grow Revenue," and, in this element, we are especially grateful to a group of Manitoba leaders who, through a new company of Adventurers, pledged exceptional multi-year contributions to support our work. Together with the Government of Canada — which supports our outreach programs — and with the continuing interest and investment of the Hudson's Bay Company History Foundation, these generous contributors help to make possible enhancements to our programming as we prepare for the Canada 150 celebrations.

Every day, we receive charitable contributions from forward-thinking Canadians. With this support, we raise the profile of all history organizations, historians, and enthusiasts who recognize and share the stories of our country.

— David Ross

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Canada's History Society was founded in 1994 to popularize Canadian history. The Society's work includes *Canada's History* magazine, CanadasHistory.ca, *Kayak: Canada's History Magazine for Kids*, and the Governor General's History Awards.

HUDSON'S BAY

Hudson's Bay Company History Foundation is the History Society's founding patron. It remains our largest private donor, with an annual grant essential to supporting the delivery of our programs.

On the Cover:

Clockwise from left: Ontario Lieutenant-Governor Elizabeth Dowdeswell, left, and former Quebec MP Monique Bégin at the History Makers Dinner in Ottawa. Illustrations of Inuit art pioneer Kenojuak Ashevak and painter Pauline Johnson. Governor General's History Awards for Excellence in Teaching recipients Craig Brumwell, Jennifer Janzen, Yoland Bouchard, Shashi Shergill, Kathryn Whitfield, and Kim Sadowsky. Kayak Kids Illustrated History Challenge recipient Lou Savard receives her medal from Governor General David Johnston. Illustrations of anti-slavery activist Mary Ann Shadd Cary and writer Gabrielle Roy. A display of Canada's History publications.

TOP LEFT: ANDREW WORKMAN DAVID ROSS PHOTO: NORTHERN ARTISTS RIGHT PAGE: RIDEAU HALL PHOTO

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SUPERB STORYTELLER

Bestselling author Lawrence Hill receives the Governor General's History Award for Popular Media: The Pierre Berton Award from David Johnston, Governor General of Canada, at Rideau Hall in Ottawa on October 16, 2015. Hill's masterpiece, *The Book of Negroes,* was turned into a CBC miniseries in 2015. The award is presented annually by Canada's History to those who have brought Canadian history to a wider audience.

CELEBRATING GREAT WOMEN

History texts have for too long ignored the incredible contributions of women. In 2015, the Society made women's stories the focus of a special issue of *Canada's History* magazine, and also of our Canada's History Forum.

In the magazine, a panel of prominent women was recruited to select "30 Great Women" who each helped to make Canada a better place for all of us. Nominees included artist Emily Carr, civil rights activist Viola Desmond, and suffragist Nellie McClung. Readers also were invited to go online at CanadasHistory.ca/GreatWomen to nominate other worthy women.

In October, as part of the Governor General's History Awards in Ottawa, the Canada's History Forum and the History Makers Dinner each celebrated the accomplishments — both historic and current — of Canadian women. Highlights of the events included a compelling panel discussion on women's history featuring authors and historians Charlotte Gray, Lawrence Hill, and Danielle Metcalfe-Chenail, and a dinner celebration hosted by journalist Ann Medina.

Dinner guests included Lieutenant-Governor Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Supreme Court Justice Rosalie Abella, former federal cabinet minister Monique Bégin, Senior Citizenship Judge Renata Brum Bozzi, and Major (Ret.) Dee Brasseur, one of the world's first female CF-18 pilots.

LE DÎNER HISTOIRE EN MARCHE
HM
THE HISTORY MAKERS DINNER
TD
NELLIE McCLUNG

Clockwise from top left: Maude Couturier, 2014 Young Citizens Award recipient, returns to congratulate the 2015 Young Citizens recipients at the History Makers Dinner. A History Makers Dinner place setting featuring a Nellie McClung souvenir playing card. Young Citizens recipients Nadia H., Sanai M., and Judy L. pose for a photo at the History Makers Dinner. Award-winning journalist Ann Medina hosts the History Makers Dinner. The History Makers Dinner opens with a performance of traditional indigenous drumming.

HISTORY BY DESIGN

Kayak
OH CANADA!
OUR FLAG TURNS 50
CANADA'S HIST RY
REAT
AR
JOHN McCRAE'S
ERS FIELDS

Our flagship magazine, *Canada's History*, marked its ninety-fifth year with an elegant, accessible, and modern redesign that allows the magazine to better showcase its award-winning stories, historic images, and art. We set newsstand sales records and won several awards, including Magazine of the Year at the Manitoba Magazine Awards.

Meanwhile, *Kayak: Canada's History Magazine for Kids* published several themed issues in 2015 — including "Oh Canada!," "Rebellion and Resistance," "Meet our Prime Ministers," and "How Furs Built Canada" — that engaged, and entertained younger Canadian readers.

PHOTOS TOP LEFT: ANDREW WORKMAN

FEAR
WAR
Power

Above: Young Citizens listen intently to their Canadian War Museum tour guide. Lower right: Stills taken from videos submitted by Young Citizens Isabelle, Kirsten, Judy, and Reed.

GIVING THE PAST A FUTURE

Heritage Fairs and Young Citizens programs showcase the talent and ethusiasm of young Canadians everywhere.

Canada's History believes that cultivating a love of history among young Canadians is a key to ensuring the past has a future. That's why we are proud to support young historians everywhere through our Heritage Fairs and Young Citizens programs

Across Canada, more than sixty thousand students researched and presented their results at local and regional Heritage Fairs.

Heritage Fairs bring together excited young Canadians with family and community members to share Canadian history.

Student projects include explorations into indigenous history, women's suffrage, early settlers, local veterans, and even what's buried in their own backyards.

The best and brightest in 2015 were selected as Young Citizens and invited to create videos about their history projects.

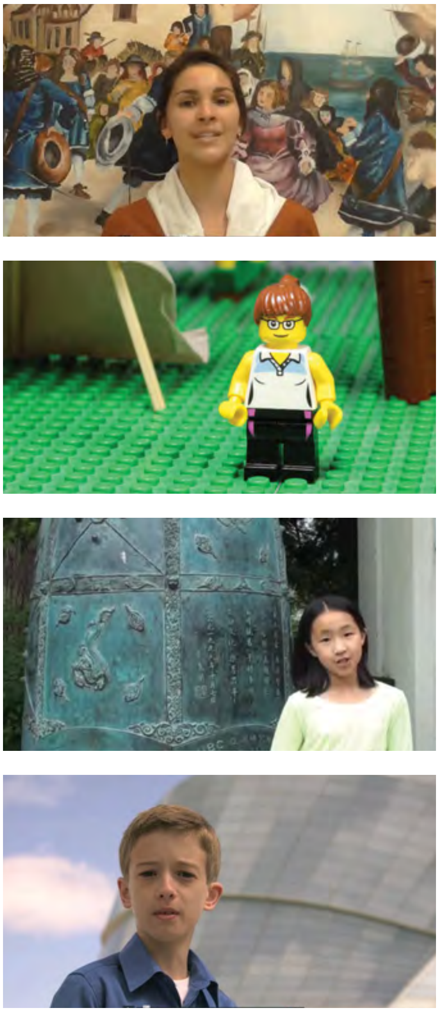
We received 178 videos from across Canada, and in June Canadians cast more than thirty-eight thousand votes for their favourites.

The top twenty-six students — two from every province and territory — were then invited to Ottawa in the fall to participate in a national youth forum.

If we have learned one thing, it's that these students always steal the show. Their enthusiasm for history and for what makes Canada an incredible place is contagious.

They are passionate and always bring new perspectives to old stories that bring them to life in new ways.

We appreciate the investment and support provided by the Government of Canada; the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Ministers of Culture and Heritage; and Great West Life, London Life and Canada Life.



TOP PHOTO: COURTESY OF LAURA ARNOLD LOWER RIGHT: STILLS FROM YOUNG CITIZEN VIDEOS

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This year's fundraising efforts realized a total of $2,193,081 in contributions from our members, corporations, foundations, and partner organizations. Canada's History extends a special thanks to all of our donors for their generosity. Gifts of $100 or more have been recognized in this honour roll.

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33%

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35%

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11

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71

NUMBER OF ONLINE NEWSLETTERS SENT IN 2015

62

GOVERNOR GENERAL'S HISTORY AWARD RECIPIENTS SINCE 2011

5

PUBLISHING AWARDS WON IN 2015

American President Franklin Roosevelt, seated left, and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, seated right, meet at Ship Harbour, Newfoundland, August 1941.

ALAMY

Waves of hope

East Coast community celebrates pivotal Second World War meeting.

When Winston Churchill came to the Newfoundland outport of Ship Harbour, it was in the darkest days of the Second World War. He did not have much time for the local people.

This year, for the event's seventy-fifth anniversary, from August 11 to 14, things are going to be different in Ship Harbour.

In August 1941, the British prime minister, arriving aboard the battleship *Prince of Wales*, met American President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who arrived aboard the cruiser *Augusta*. The summit at Ship Harbour was their first: four days of intense and secret meetings with their most senior advisors aboard the anchored ships.

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor was still four months away, and the United States was still at peace.

Churchill had come to Newfoundland hoping to draw the United States into the war. Roosevelt hoped at least to shift American public opinion away from isolationism. The Ship Harbour summit fulfilled neither hope. At first it was regarded as a failure.

Yet, in the war room of the *Augusta,* Roosevelt and Churchill had created the Atlantic Charter, a statement of the principles their nations stood for: the self-determination of nations, free trade and economic co-operation, and a permanent system of general security. As more nations joined the war against fascism, the Atlantic Charter became the blueprint for the postwar world, the germ of the United Nations Charter.

Peter Russell, a Toronto political scientist, calls the Ship Harbour summit "a story of how the alliance of the two big democracies was truly bonded on the waters of Placentia Bay. 'We are bonded now,' Elliott Roosevelt said his father, the American president, said to him as they walked back from the church service on the *Prince of Wales*. It was not just calculated foreign policy. It was a personal trust and understanding between the two leaders. It is fair to say that the beginning of effective resistance to Hitler was in Placentia Bay."

The memory of the Atlantic Charter summit has endured at Ship Harbour. In 1991, on the fiftieth anniversary, Parks Canada erected a handsome monument overlooking the anchorage. For the seventy-fifth anniversary this August, Newfoundland and Labrador will host another Atlantic Charter conference. Prominent Newfoundlanders, international scholars, a Churchill descendant, and Roosevelt biographer Conrad Black will gather in St. John's and Ship Harbour to recall the great events of 1941.

The Atlantic Charter summit was held in deepest secrecy. When the great ships appeared, locals feared the worst: Just eight months earlier, the arrival of another naval force had meant the displacement of four hundred people for a naval base at nearby Argentia. In 1941, local people learned nothing about Roosevelt's and Churchill's presence. Only Churchill went ashore, and only to stretch his legs at a deserted cove.

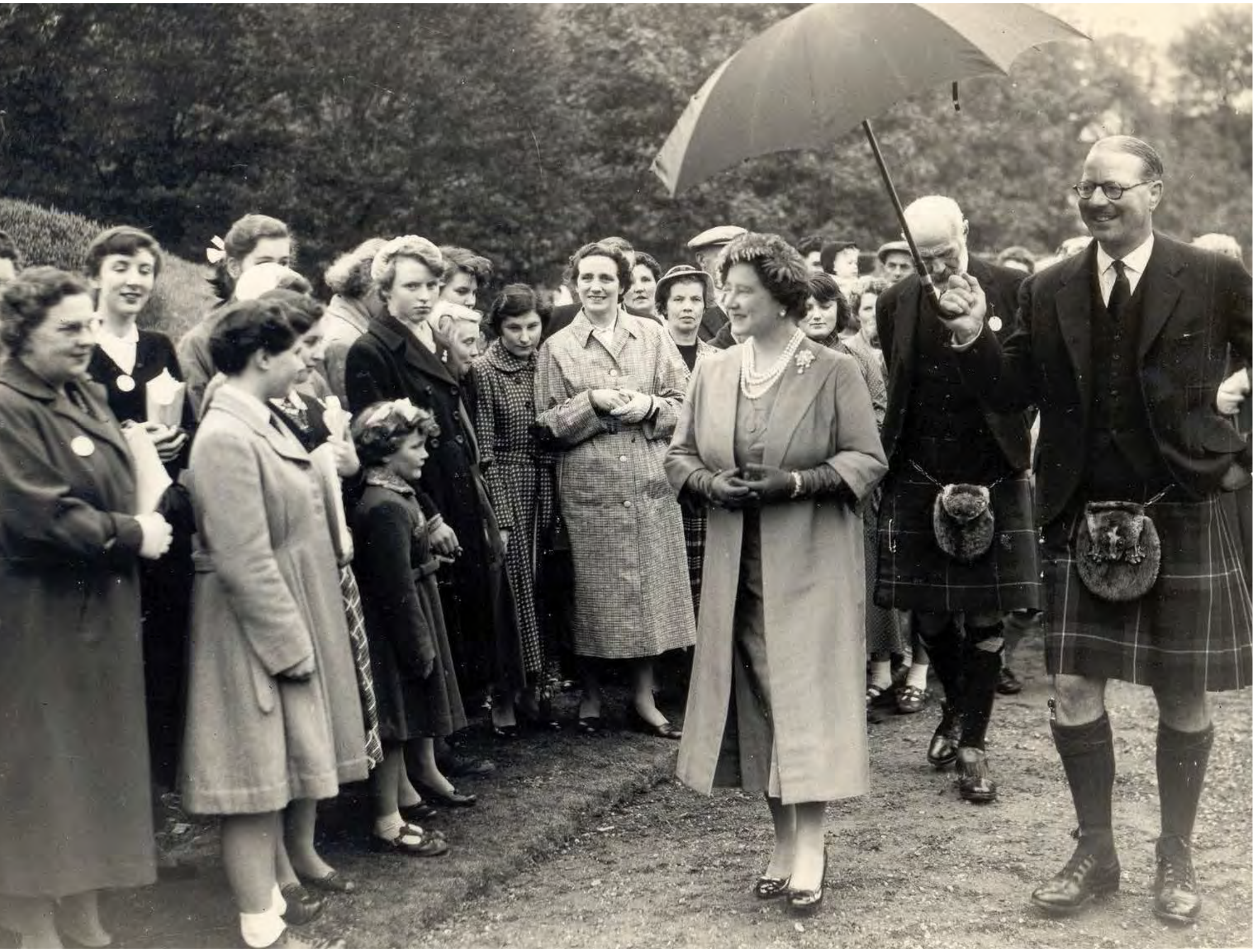
This year, the people of Ship Harbour, population about two hundred, and the Atlantic Charter Foundation they have established, are going to be central to the commemorations. This August, their foundation will host a garden party, a church service, fireworks, a barbecue, and a fishing derby, all wrapped up with a Newfoundland kitchen party — "not actually in a kitchen," said Tom O'Keefe, one of the foundation's local advisors.

The Placentia Cultural Arts Centre will launch Newfoundland playwright Agnes Walsh's new Atlantic Charter play for the conference delegates — but really for the whole community.

The play is not about Roosevelt and Churchill; it's about local people and what they did while the great men conferred with each other offshore.

The formal conference about the Atlantic Charter summit will be moving and impressive. But, if you are in the area in August, the play and the Ship Harbour's kitchen party might be the really hot tickets.

Christopher Moore comments in every issue of Canada's History.



Homeland culture

The attached photo of Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, was taken in 1955 and portrays both family and historical connections between Canada and Scotland. The lady on the extreme left of the picture is Jeannie Presly, my late mother-in-law. The girl in front of her is her daughter Kathleen, now my wife of forty years.

The photo was taken on the grounds of the Haddo Estate, near the Scottish city of Aberdeen. The man in the kilt is a grandson of the earl of Aberdeen, who was the Governor General of Canada from 1893 to 1898. Kathleen (Kay) was born in 1945 at her parent's home on the Mains of Aquhorthies, a prominent farm on the Haddo Estate where the laird resided and which is still owned by a member of the Presly family.

The Preslys were founding members and performers of Lady Aberdeen's choral group, which continued for several generations. The group produced musicals and choral works under her direction, including some written by such notable composers as Gilbert & Sullivan and Mozart. She occasionally invited dignitaries from London to serve as guest conductors, including Benjamin Britten and Vaughan Williams.

The result was to bring culture to the small village of Tarves and its environs, some twenty kilometres from Aberdeen.

Submitted by Robert S. Wright of Fenelon Falls, Ontario.

Do you have a photograph that captures a moment, important or ordinary, in Canada's history? If so, have it copied (please don't send priceless originals) and mail it to Album, c/o Canada's History, Bryce Hall, Main Floor, 515 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R3B 2E9. Or email your photo to album@CanadasHistory.ca. Please provide a brief description of the photo, including its date and location. If possible, identify people in the photograph and provide further information about the event or situation illustrated. Photos may be cropped or adjusted as necessary for presentation in the magazine. To have your posted submission returned, please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

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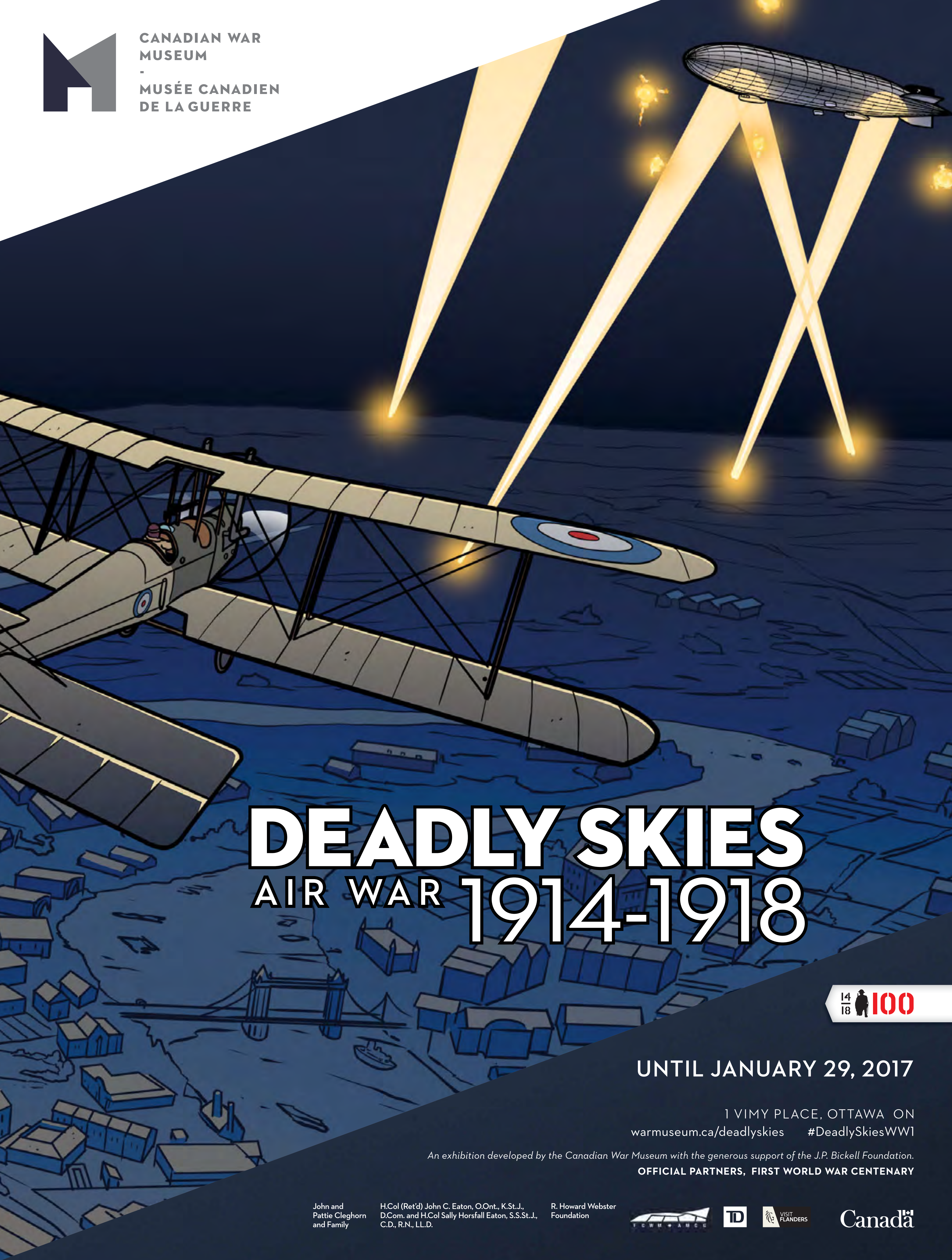

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